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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the features of discourse in the written student-teacher interaction in dialogue journals. It was assumed that such an activity would encourage the negotiation of meaning and roles, and that the data would provide evidence of that negotiation. Data were drawn from 32 journals written by 16-to-18-year-old students in an Italian school and for whom English was a second language. There were a total of 218 student entries and 217 teacher responses. Entries were analyzed for degree of student-teacher interactivity, including, for students, introduction of utterances signaling an interaction, topic continuation, and negotiation for topic initiation, and for the teacher, affiliation and appreciation and suggestion of a course of action. Techniques used to gear an entry to the student are also examined. It is concluded that dialogue journals can be a valuable tool to individualize instruction and engage teacher and student in authentic social communication, creating a context for students to construct meaning. Creation of meaning, negotiation of face, and rapport-building all emerged in the discourse. Appended materials include data summaries from the discourse analyses, and transcriptions of journal entries. Contains over 100 references. (MSE)

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ED 393 294

UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI BOLOGNA

FACOLTA' DI LETTERE E FILOSOFIA

Corso di Laurea in Lingue e Letterature Straniere Moderne

Student-Teacher Dialogue Journals as a Tool for Developing Interactional Ability

Tesi di Laurea in Lingua Inglese

Relatore:
Prof.ssa RUEY BRODINE

Presentata da:
EMANUELA MORINI

Correlatore:
Prof.ssa VALENTINA POGGI GHIGI

Sessione Estiva
Anno Accademico 1994/95

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Parole Chiave:
English, Journals, Interaction, Pragmatics, Learning

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To My Students

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Transcription Conventions

<S33/10.01>	Student Code Number/day and month of entry
<T03/14.04>	Teacher Code Number/ day and month of to student
<i>	indentation
<p>	new paragraph
<U> <u>	underlining, start/end
<WU> <wu>	wiggly underlining, start/end
<A> <a>	writing added above, start/end
<B> <b>	writing added below start/end
<PE> <pe>	text in pencil, start/end
~~text~~	text which has been crossed out
//text//	alternatives or translations written above
<blank>	blank space
<???>	illegible word or part of text
<ITQ> <itq>	use of Italian quotes, start/end
<FT> <ft>	footnote in the text, start/end
<arrow>	arrow to introduce text
<BO> <bo>	border around text
<L> <l>	word listing, start/end

0 Introduction

Children develop language to represent experience, to explore the world, to reflect upon it, to communicate and interact with others (Christie 1989). In the classroom, little if any of the competency developed by language learners in their social environment outside of school is exploited to build language knowledge. Nevertheless, in their theoretical works, scholars have long pointed to the necessity of complementing the teaching/learning context with a social approach:

> A model of language must design it with a face toward communicative conduct and social life. (Hymes 1972:278)

Interaction is, in fact, a fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy, since "everything that happens in the classroom happens through a process of live person-to-person interaction" (Allwright 1984:156, cited in Ellis 1994). However, although many pedagogists agree that language learning is a social enterprise and that it develops best through social interaction, promotion of interactional ability in the classroom is not always central to the language teacher's practice. Too often, learning activities focus to a large extent on form, with a correspondingly strong regard for the learner's "language product," rather than the learning process.

When language classroom activities do focus on communication, this usually means, as Aston (1988:8) points out, "developing the ability to convey *information*," disregarding almost entirely learners' need to establish satisfactory interpersonal relationships to fit in socially.

Geoghegan (1983) argues that failure to establish satisfactory interpersonal relations is one of the major causes of distress among second language[1] students, who consider making friends and socializing to be one of their main purposes when learning a language.[2] And yet, although "classrooms are places where people socialize as well as learn" (Ellis 1984:126), the language for social purposes is too rarely taught, and worse yet, too rarely used in any truly natural way in the classroom context.

Language teaching has long had a bias toward transaction-style information transfer, following an A to B model of communication as the main business of talk. Enhancement of interactional ability in the language classroom became secondary to that model. It is not surprising, therefore, that the notion of learning has also been assimilated to a matter of information transfer.

This bias has directed educators' attention to the learner's final product rather than the learner's learning process. However, because instruction can only partly control the learning process, (Prabhu 1987 [reported in Aston 1988 & Brodine 1990]), acquisition is today being viewed more and more as a learner-directed process, with learners coping with their own developmental learning stages, and the teacher seen as a strategic element inducing perlocutionary effects on this building and consolidation of language knowledge.

---

[1] In this analysis, no distinction is made between the use of the term English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL), even if the distinction is not irrelevant for the use of dialogue journals.

[2] An exchange student from Norway who was attending the fourth-year class in this study reported in her journal that she felt frustrated because she could not socialize within the Italian community: "One thing I'm sad about: <p> <i> The thing that bothers me most these days is probably the fact that I don't speak Italian fluently. I know I will learn it in time, and that I have to have some patience, but it's still frustrating. It makes me feel rather left out of everything: I can't read a newspaper the way I'm used to, I get headaches from trying to understand television series and movies, and since my vocabulary isn't that varied, I have to keep my language simple and can't really say all the things I want to. *But the biggest problem may be how it hinders my social life: it's hard to make close friends when the subjects of discussion are still limited* "emphasis added." <S17/22.11>

The pedagogical implications concerning natural language use in the classroom — through which the learner could experiment with the social potential of the target language — are extremely interesting. In fact:

> We are generally required to use our knowledge of the language system in order to achieve some kind of communicative purpose. That is to say, we are generally called upon to produce instances of language use: we do not simply manifest the abstract system of the language, we at the same time realize it as meaningful communicative behavior. (Widdowson 1978:3)

Through genuine social interaction, learners are afforded the opportunity to negotiate meaning and face, and therefore decode the language system, on the one hand, while understanding appropriate social behavior, on the other. While using the foreign language, students are fully engaged in the production of authentic discourse, generating functional language to attain their communicative purposes through the exercise of capacity.

The following research has looked into the possibility of creating functional language use through written interaction. By writing interactively on a regular basis, students and teacher can open up channels of authentic communication within the classroom context. Students are thus allowed to get involved in the discourse process to generate meaningful language and experience real pragmatic complexity. The teacher, in turn, can become a collaborator, helping students to go beyond their level of proficiency, and simultaneously gets insights into the learning process of each student.

The learner is thus using English to learn it rather than learning to use English and is empowered by the authenticity of the activity. Interactive writing calls for personal direct investment in the process because what is at stake is the participants' real self. The interaction turns into a meaningful social activity, where rapport can also be negotiated. Students and teacher are concerned with defining their positions in a person-to-person exchange which goes beyond the mere student-teacher role relationship in a joint effort to construct social communication together through language.

Through interactive writing, students are given opportunities to develop an interactional ability in their second or foreign language, and therefore allowed to meet their expectations in that language. To be able to successfully interact with members of the target language speaking community is not only socially important. It also enhances the learner's motivation for learning the second language and ultimately facilitates its acquisition. Interactive writing could consequently be considered as a valuable tool for restoring to education the essential nature of language.

1 Learning to Use the Language for Social Purposes

1.0 Preliminaries

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how most of the tasks carried out in the classroom and most teacher-student relations are still biased with artificiality and do not mirror authentic communicative situations where socio-pragmatic factors[3] are assumed to be at stake. In order to understand how and when to implement correct and appropriate behavior in a language in relation to context, language learners need also be given opportunities to use the language system in the "normal business of social interaction" (Widdowson 1978) to build up communicative competence in that language.

Considering for the moment that the quality of the language used reflects the quality of the language received and *vice-versa*, it is argued here that the reproduction in the classroom of more genuine sociolinguistic contexts is likely to engage teacher and students in genuine negotiatory work and therefore become a valuable contribution to methodology to convert the traditional classroom into a more meaningful and effective learning environment. Although the teaching context still lays too much emphasis on form and correctness — which are inevitable constituents of language classroom life — it seems however possible to organize, within the formal setting, spontaneous social exchanges with the teacher as a real interlocutor.[4]

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[3] This study is to be included in a sociolinguistic perspective of linguistic research and therefore does not take psycholinguistic factors into consideration.

[4] Ellis (1994:581) observes that "although the potential exists for natural discourse to occur in the classroom, studies show that it seldom does."

The introduction of social talk or small talk as an integral part of classroom discourse could be an effective tool for successful learning, requiring learners to use the foreign language for authentic socio-communicative purposes. This study confirms that interactive writing helps students set up a one-to-one channel of individual communication with the teacher and become more aware in the school setting of the interactive/interactional implications inherent in second language (L2) use. The students consequently develop a social approach to language learning.

1.1 Writing and Second Language Acquisition

Language use is both a cognitive and social enterprise as is language acquisition. Students need to learn how a language system functions and how to use it appropriately to interact in society. Current interactionist theories of second language acquisition have, in fact, laid emphasis on interaction as being fundamental in the acquisition of linguistic, cognitive and socio-communicative behaviors connected with the learning process:

> Language development is the result of an interaction between the learner's existing state of knowledge (linguistic and conceptual) and the linguistic environment to which he is exposed. There are many forms of possible exposure, but the most natural is conversation. (Ellis 1984:13)

In fact, "language, first or second, does not develop in a vacuum" (Seliger 1983:250); its acquisition depends to a large extent on the opportunities learners are given to come to terms with a socially meaningful environment, which allows them to use the language for communicating their real needs and interests in a pragmatically authentic context.

When using the language as a tool for communication, learners form and test hypotheses about the L2, and therefore can turn input into intake to eventually generate output.[5] Recent research indicates that learning how to manage conversations and interaction in general has strong implications for second language acquisition (Hatch 1978, reported in Ellis 1994). Studies conducted by Seliger (1983) confirm, in fact, that both quantitative and qualitative language achievement is attained with High Input Generators (HIGs), whereas Low Input Generators (LIGs)[6] progress comparatively slower.

The assumption that language use promotes learning is partly derived from research on first language (L1) acquisition, which, building on the work of Soviet psychologist Vygotsky, has progressively begun to focus on adult/child interactions to account for success in language learning.[7] It has been noted that incorporation of new knowledge takes place in children's linguistic system when interacting with a more proficient interactant within what Vygotsky (1934/62, 1978) termed the "zone of proximal development":[8]

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[5] Input is defined as the quantity and quality of spoken and written language made available to the learner in the context of interaction or in the context of non reciprocal discourse, either in a formal or natural setting. Intake, as defined by Ellis (1994:708), is "that portion of the input that learners notice and therefore take into temporary memory. Intake may be subsequently accomodated in the learner's interlanguage system [and] become part of long-term memory." Output consists, instead, in the learner's efforts to come to terms with his/her linguistic knowledge to produce talk in the L2.

[6] HIGs are students who take active part in the learning process by initiating interactions with their teacher and peers, thus creating opportunities for use in the L2. This results in more personalized input for themselves and therefore translates into higher opportunities in forming and testing hypotheses about the L2. In contrast, LIGs are students who mainly participate in the formal interactions directed by the teacher and respond only when elicitation is urged from them. These students tend to remain apart from the social use of the L2 both in the classroom and outside.

[7] Joy Kreeft Peyton & Mulugeta Seyoum (Peyton & Staton 1993:175) recall that "the crucial role that interaction plays in the process of acquiring a language is clearly demonstrated in studies of first-language acquisition" and cite in this regard Snow & Ferguson (1977), Wells (1981,1986) and Holzmann (1983).

[8] Vygotsky (1978:86) defines the "zone of proximal development" as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers."

> Children become able to guide their own actions and act autonomously as a result of internalizing the strategies which they have jointly participated in through interaction. (Staton 1988d:303)

More specifically, children become knowledgeable in their own language because they learn "from deep to surface, from meaning to words and sounds" by sharing the learning process with their parents and caretakers or with the assistance of other members of the community (Staton & Shuy 1988:195). The conversational work thus conducted when acquiring a language results in a series of reciprocal adjustments to enhance linguistic and socio-communicative competence through the negotiation of meaning, described as

> the "work" involved in helping one another communicate, for example, by jointly expressing messages, filling in lapses in the conversation, indicating gaps in understanding, and repairing communication breakdowns (Scarcella & Higa 1981:410)

as well as face, defined by Mey (1993:72) in the following terms:

> "Face" is commonly believed to be derived from a vaguely Eastern notion of politeness associated with the expression "to lose face." In the established interpretation of this concept (due to Brown & Levinson [1978]), the notion of face has two aspects: a positive one, by which a person's status as an autonomous, independent, free agent is affirmed; and a negative one, by which a person's immunity from outside interference and undue external pressure is stressed."

It is precisely through the joint production and reception of interactive discourse aiming at the construction of meaningful, functional and appropriate messages that the child's language system is claimed to be in movement towards more targeted language uses[9] in order to reach both cognitive and affective convergence[10] with his/her interlocutors:

---

[9] When interacting with more competent interlocutors, L2 learners are also claimed to acquire the language system by being exposed to language which is constantly beyond their level of competence. For acquisition to occur however, the language to which learners have access must be comprehensible according to Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis, and interactively adjusted through negotiation to suit the participants' conversational needs (Long 1980 [reported in Ellis 1994], Leki 1992). Production in the L2 is all the same important. Although learner's output is not considered to affect acquisition directly by

> When a child learns a language he learns at the same time how language (in general) works. He does not, quite obviously, just acquire a formal system and manifest it as usage.[11] Inextricably bound up with his acquisition of the formal elements of his language is a development of awareness of how these elements are used in the normal business of social interaction. (Widdowson 1978:52)

Now, Staton & Shuy (1988:196) claim that school has reversed the bottom up direction of the learning process, thanks to which, children can act as the real protagonists in their learning needs. In school, students are asked to learn from surface to deep, through a formal approach to the language:

> This constitutes one of the most counterproductive asymmetries in traditional education: Schools have taught children in a direction which opposes the way they learn things in nonschool settings. (Staton & Shuy 1988:196)

Also, whole language approaches[12] have championed social interaction as one facilitating aspect of the developmental processes underlying language acquisition. From a whole language perspective, "language classes should be learner centered" and "language is best learned when kept whole" (Freeman & Freeman 1989:178-179). For this reason, by using the "four modes of instruction" (ibid.) — listening, speaking, reading and writing — meaningfully and functionally in social intercourse, students are allowed to gradually break down the language as a whole into its constituent parts and gain control

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Krashen, much research has demonstrated that output plays a crucial role in language learning (cf. Pica 1988, Leki 1992, Ellis 1994).

[10] Aston (1988:77) defines cognitive convergence as the outcome of a process of communication enabling conversational participants to reach understanding, whereas affective convergence is the outcome of a process of comity through which agreement is reached.

[11] In his distinction between usage and use, Widdowson (1978) refers to usage as being "the abstract system of the language", whereas use is defined as "the knowledge of the language system in order to achieve some kind of communicative purpose."

[12] For whole language approaches to writing with secondary students of English as a second language, cf. Freeman & Freeman's article in Johnson and Roen (1989).

over the system according to their own individual learning pace and abilities.[13]

It then appears that in the light of what is known so far about language acquisition, it is important that the language in the learning context should approach the quality of naturalistic settings. Although this may sound rather idealistic, research has indeed claimed that "classroom learning would proceed most smoothly if teaching stopped interfering in the learning process and left learners to learn in the same way as children acquired their mother tongue" (Ellis 1994:17). One major contribution in this respect is that of communicative approaches, which started to be implemented in the language classroom during the 1960s in order to supplement the socio-communicative deficiency in traditional language teaching. However, since then, interactivity has been fostered mainly in the area of oral discourse practice (cf. 1.3 below). Of the four "modes of instruction" above (Freeman & Freeman 1989:178-179), traditionally communicative-based school curricula seem to have privileged speaking and listening, confining writing and reading as secondary activities in terms of communicative potential enhancement.[14]

That is probably why in the field of writing research and teaching, scholars such as Staton & Shuy (1988) advocate that writing and reading deserve to be exploited more fully to develop communicative competence in language acquisition:

> [...] there are instances in which the child's natural communicative competence can be built into reading/writing activities, so that the [...] bottom-up direction of learning is maintained. (Staton & Shuy 1988:196)

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[13] In citing Vygotsky (1978), Freeman & Freeman (in Johnson & Roen 1989) report: "Studies of child language acquisition suggest that learning involves a gradual differentiation of the whole into parts, not a building up of parts into the whole."

[14] Writing and reading practice usually follows as recapitulatory end-of-chapter exercises in textbooks, rather than being conceived of as actual learning experiences in their own right.

Vygotsky, too, has stressed the fact that communicative language use is not confined to oral discourse:

> Teaching should be organized in such a way that reading and writing are necessary for something. (Vygotsky 1978:117)

It is easy to understand that to make reading and writing "necessary for something" in the classroom, their functional dimension would also be recovered. Teacher and students could create the social conditions which make "reading and writing as a single whole, just as speaking and listening are a seamless whole in oral discourse" (Staton & Shuy 1988:200), and consequently experience personally the true interactive nature and pragmatic complexity of language.

The study presented here argues that interactive writing in the form of dialogue journals, described more fully in 1.5 and illustrated in the data, can be a powerful educational tool for language acquisition in being the product of an interactive/interactional process, where teachers and students become collaborators (Peyton 1988a, Vanett & Jurich 1990, Brodine 1990) and alternate in the roles of writers and readers to co-direct the interaction. In it, the writing and reading cycle is manifested and realized as both usage and use.[15] This implies that writers are aware that when they write, they do it for a specific audience and for some purpose in mind, and when they read, they do it because their writing is eliciting some kind of reaction which may be meaningful to them. In this way, participants would be re-introduced into the writing process and invited to focus on meaning rather than form — to once again proceed in their learning experience from deep to surface.

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[15] It is useful here to recall Widdowson's (1978:67) distinction between linguistic skills and communicative abilities. Whereas the former indicate that speaking, listening, reading and writing are being conceived of as usage, the latter refer to the language system being treated as use. Although "the acquisition of linguistic skills does not seem to guarantee the consequent acquisition of communicative abilities in a language [...] traditionally the focus of attention has been on the linguistic skills" (ibid.) in the school setting even if the reverse holds true.

This study concludes that learners' joint contributions in the construction of discourse are fundamental from a pedagogical perspective not only for a good outcome of the interaction itself, but as indispensable factors to develop their interlanguage. Thus, when writing becomes an authentic social activity in the school setting, students can participate with their teachers and/or peers in the production of meaningful exchanges, offering the essential conditions for language acquisition to take place. This in turn increases the opportunity to use the linguistic system and motivates students to utilize the whole of their experience (Corder 1967, 1986).

1.2 Social Interaction and the L2 Classroom

The traditional second language classroom context can hardly be described as a place that enhances authentic social interaction. Language is still treated in classroom activities as an object of learning, rather than a tool for real communication, and the models learners are exposed to lack the range of characteristics of natural language. Though we are reminded that "the engagement of language in social life has a positive, productive aspect" (Hymes 1972:278), very rarely are learners given opportunities to practice the language functionally in the classroom and consequently, very seldom do they find themselves engaged in first-hand experience of L2 social talk (Ellis 1984, Aston 1988, Freeman & Freeman 1989). This is especially true in classrooms where English is taught as a foreign language, where social interactions are more likely to occur in the learner's L1 (Aston 1988, Storchi 1993). Research has, in fact, highlighted that:

> Classrooms are places where people socialize as well as learn. [...] In many classrooms, however, social exchanges are not encouraged; they take place in time that is "borrowed" from the pursuance of pedagogic goals. Pupils form an expectancy that the kind of discourse they will engage in in classrooms will be "pedagogic" rather than "natural" and,

> as a result, may be reluctant to make use of social opportunities for talk.[16] (Ellis 1984:126)

The problem with the kind of language teachers and learners are used to being exposed to in the traditional classroom is, therefore, a sort of socio-pragmatic deprivation in approaching language teaching and learning.

> The language classroom is, by definition, a contrived context for the use of language as a tool of communication. The bulk of time in a language class is devoted to practicing language for its own sake because the participants in this activity realize that that is the expressed purpose of their gathering together in a room with a blackboard and a language expert, the teacher. (Seliger 1983:250-251)

Overemphasis on pedagogic activities[17] may have dangerous counterproductive effects on the learning process. As a result of excessive concentration on language usage and/or on artificial discourse, in fact, the language being learned could be felt by the learner as a remote and detached experience, thus becoming a meaningless system the moment he/she finds out that the classroom provides for a linguistic environment where:

> [...] the way he is required to learn the foreign language conflicts with the way he knows language actually works [...] (Widdowson 1978:18)

It is through their everyday experience of language use that learners could profitably acquire the abstract system of the language while at the same time learning how to use the language for their own socio-communicative purposes. This study supports the view that the negotiatory work made available by the linguistic community put learners in a position to virtually comprehend "how interactions are managed" (Widdowson

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[16] Freeman & Freeman (1989:181) also remark that "Classrooms in which social interaction is promoted are often viewed as undisciplined."

[17] Widdowson (1978:67) observes that "an overemphasis on drills and exercises" to have students practice sentences in production and reception is likely "to inhibit the development of communicative abilities." Also, Tarone & Yule (1989:18) report that "concentration on developing only grammatical competence, however, will not provide the learner with the ability to produce sentences or utterances which are appropriate to the context of use, or to interpret the appropriacy of such utterances."

1978:52). By the same token, when given the opportunity to experience and control conversational behavior directly — and this necessarily includes a right to have equal access to the ongoing exchange — students are called upon to implement the procedural work needed in order to close and open conversational turns, to share turn-taking with their interlocutors, to introduce or drop a topic, to act strategically on the conversation. In short, the learner is given the chance "to do things with words" (Austin 1963) in the classroom. Nonetheless, how this could be achieved successfully is yet another question.

Within the classroom context, Seliger (1983) distinguishes two general categories of language interaction. On the one hand, the teacher directs the interaction with his/her students as "part of the formal practice normally found in the language class," controlling turns "by specifically nominating or calling on a particular student or by eliciting a response from the class as if it were a single interlocutor" (ibid.). On the other hand, students may create opportunities for use by steering interaction toward themselves as individuals, and get personalized teacher input. Given the fact that natural conversations are assumed to provide the learner with opportunities to produce language as use and therefore to take active part in authentic socio-communicative events, the reproduction in the classroom and subsequent exposure to the quality of the language typical of naturalistic settings should help the learner understand target language use effectively.

This, however, is not as simple as it would appear. Although methodological efforts have been made to reproduce real-life situations in the classroom with a view of engaging learners in genuine interactions "to retain the communicative value of linguistic elements" (Widdowson 1983:33) and have them tackle with the "notional and functional meanings" (ibid.) of the language, the learners continue, nevertheless, to experience the artificiality of the pseudo communicative-based tasks carried out in the classroom. In the first place, this may be due to the fact that communicative approaches "analyze language use into constituent parts, thereby reducing the dynamic process of communication to a static inventory of items" (Widdowson 1983:34). Secondly, though few teachers today confine discourse to the rigid IRF pattern (teacher initiation, student response, teacher feedback, described in 1.3 below), where "the pupils have a very restricted range of verbal functions to perform" (Sinclair & Brazil 1982:58), the learner still persists in being confronted with items that "carry functional labels, [but] are items separated out and isolated from the communicative process of which they are naturally a part" (Widdowson 1983:34):

> This means that at some point in learning the process has somehow to be recreated, and the items connected up with each other and recharged with dynamic life so as to become elements of language use. (Widdowson 1983:34)

Besides disrupting the process, then, communicative-based activities are widely recognized to lack genuine psycho-social investment on the part of the teacher as well as the students, which has led linguists recently to claim that "communicative function cannot be isolated from sociocultural context" (Tarone & Yule 1989:18). In fact, the communicative environment these activities re-create is necessarily only partially authentic, in that participants playing assigned roles in simulated situations are not required to risk face personally.[18] The learners being thus forced into exchanges reflecting and eliciting contrived modes of discourse are likely to perceive the language as distant and fake precisely because the ultimate purpose is overtly felt as being didactic.

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[18] It might be objected that role and discourse in dialogue journals have their own variety of artificiality. It will be argued, however, that notwithstanding the fact that the role of teacher and that of learner are hardly leveled out in a teaching context, it is very true that the involvement in interactive writing is less contrived than, for example, in role-playing.

When, instead, occasions are created in the classroom for learners to make sense of the system not only morpho-syntactically but also socio-pragmatically, the learner is called upon to properly activate the meaning and social potential of the language to realize the language system as meaningful communicative behavior. They are, in other words, offered the opportunity to develop communicative and interactional capacity for the potentially infinite creation and understanding of meaning and social context.

A new, more authentic approach would involve a more comprehensive idea of language, enabling the learner to become an active component in the teaching/learning process and not just be seen as "cannon-fodder" (Ellis 1990:67, cited in Nunan 1992) for teaching. Widdowson (1983) seems to be pointing to the direction to be taken if not to eliminate at least to minimize the drawbacks of traditional teaching methodologies when he concludes:

> What we must look for is a model of language use which does not simply atomize the user's behavior into components of competence, but which accounts for the essential features of the discourse process. (Widdowson 1983:34)

Like the child,[19] the learner should be gradually enabled to master the sociolinguistic norms underlying the language system while interacting with his/her linguistic environment. In this way,

> while learning his language, [he could] at the same time [be] acquiring control over his environment by organizing it into conceptual categories and internalizing patterns of social behavior. (Widdowson 1983:39)

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[19] Canale & Swain (1980:10) claim that "since in first language acquisition most parents and peers seem to be more interested in finding out what a child has to say than in how he/she says it, then the second language teacher might assume a similar role to provide a more natural context for second language learning."

1.3 Oral and Written Discourse in the Classroom

So far, it has been suggested that from a pedagogical perspective, "the overall aim is to enable learners to use language functionally" (McCarthy 1991:9) in authentic interactive contexts, so that experience of learning as a de-contextualized process can be avoided. Yet, classroom discourse does not seem to reflect genuine socio-communicative situations where students are afforded the opportunity to use the language purposefully and meaningfully. Nor does the classroom seem to be the right place prompting the appropriate activities which require pupils to resort to their linguistic and socio-communicative resources naturally to reach their conversational goals through authentic exchanges. Conversely, the learner's lot still appears to be constrained within the limitations of an unequivocally educational context "impart[ing] knowledge about the target language and where the linguistic core of the lesson is the main concern" (Chaudron 1988).

Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) analyzed classroom discourse and documented that this was highly structured into quite rigid patterns of interaction, with conversational power in the hands of the teacher, whose role was chiefly that of framing moves to direct, control and evaluate his/her pupils' output. The well-known Birmingham Model for the analysis of school classroom discourse refers, in fact, to a three-part exchange between teacher and learner (initiation-response-feedback) which, in itself, eloquently informs "an imbalance between 'real' communication and 'teacher talk'" (McCarthy 1991:18).

Hence, in referring to the initiation-response-feedback[20] pattern of interaction, McCarthy (1991) still notes that the traditional classroom

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[20] In Ellis (1994:575) mention is made of an additional learner's response to the teacher's follow-up move, often but not systematically produced in the L2 classroom. This response

> [...] is not the "real" world of conversation. It is a peculiar place, a place where teachers ask questions to which they already know the answers,[21] where pupils (at least younger pupils) have very limited rights as speakers, and where evaluation by the teacher of what the pupils say is a vital mechanism in the discourse structure. (McCarthy 1991:19)

Implicit in McCarthy's above observation is that, as Ellis (1984) had noted already,

> [...] the basic pattern of classroom discourse differs considerably from the discourse patterns found in normal conversations outside the classroom. (Ellis 1984:97)

When we look at initiation-response-feedback linguistic contexts, then, we notice that their fixity seems to contrast dramatically with the functionally dynamic nature of natural spoken and written language. In the first place, this means that classroom discourse is likely to lack the richness of functions and variety of conversational work characterizing natural talk and may, for this reason, have a negative impact not only in terms of quality of learner language intake and production but, and more importantly, in terms of how the learner comes to conceive of interaction management norms. Secondly, it is easy to understand that where "teachers and pupils [speak] according to very fixed perceptions of their roles" (McCarthy 1991:12), natural speech is not only broken down in de-contextualized situations but it also crystallizes into mechanically performed strings[22] of discourse

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consists in the learner's repetition of the teacher's previous utterance. The pattern of the exchange is thus redefined as IRF(R).

[21] Unreal questions conceived for educational aims little seem to promote socio-communicative abilities in the L2 learner. Display questions are felt by the L2 learner as a controlling tool in the teacher's hands for evaluation purposes and therefore prevent him/her from getting engaged in authentic interactional processes. Ellis (1984:98) reports on the subject: "For example, Long & Sato (1983) argue that display questions do not invite the learner to respond at length or to initiate new topics. They are not likely to lead to sustained discourse."

[22] This striking reduction of natural conversations outside the classroom to a mere mechanical exercise of classroom discourse is further confirmed by textbooks and language materials in general, which exhibit and embody a most general trend in methodology. McCarthy (1991:21) notes in fact: "We can also see the difference between bare exchanges

preventing the potential language user from becoming aware of the complexity inherent in natural negotiatory processes.

Apart from the absence of authentic negotiation of meaning, then, what appears evident when dealing, for instance, with an initiation-response-feedback sequence of exchanges is that "the exchange is defined as a unit which has as its outcome informational transfer" only (Aston 1988:68). Let us consider for a moment the interaction reported below:

slot	move	
Initiation	elicit	A: What's the time?
Response	inform	B: Five o'clock
Follow-up	acknowledge	A: I see

(Coulthard & Brazil 1981:103)

In the above example, not only classroom discourse contributions seem to exemplify fabricated and de-contextualized utterances, but they also seem to filter out speakers' preponderant social use of language, which, according to Firth (1937, reported in Aston 1988), makes up for four fifth of our daily conversational behavioral routines, interfering with mere conveyance of information. Consequently, traditional initiation-response-feedback contexts do risk to contribute little to successful and sustained intake of natural discourse[23] because they are so far-away from the real world. Indeed:

> [...] the IRF type of interaction of the classroom may deprive the learner of just those facilitative features which both FLD and SLD researchers have claimed are important. (Ellis 1984:98)

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of the kind often found in coursebooks and the way, in natural discourse, that speakers support and complete one another's moves, how they follow up and acknowledge replies, and other features [...]."

[23] Yet, non genuine patterns of interaction seem to be the prevalent type of discourse being produced by the teacher and the learners, at least in relative terms. Ellis (1984) observes: "The prevalence of IRF in classrooms has been well-documented by Barnes (1976) and Sinclair & Coulthard (1975)" (Ellis 1984:97). For other types of classroom interactions, cf. exhaustive discussion in Ellis (1984, 1994).

From the perspective adopted in this study, "those facilitative features" will be interpreted as those choices making it possible for the traditional classroom to cease to be still that unfortunate place where the learner is confined to a subordinate position and "often cast in the role of responder with a corresponding restriction in the range of speech acts he is able to perform" (Gremmo, Holec & Riley 1977 [reported in Ellis 1984], Harder 1980, Ellis 1980, Ellis 1994) or required to participate in distorted real-life based tasks which hardly call for any genuine psycho-social involvement on his part. Thus reduced to the role of responder, the learner might find it difficult, if not impossible, to build up the sociolinguistic abilities he seems to need to develop "the frames of reference and routines with which he can feel secure as an individual and social being" (Widdowson 1983:39), in a linguistic environment where

> [Pupils] rarely initiate, and never follow up. Most of their verbal activity is response, and normally confined strictly to the terms of the initiation. (Sinclair & Brazil 1982:58, reported in Ellis 1984)

This is not to say that the classroom should be discarded as having a totally ineffective role in the teaching/learning process. On the contrary, an analysis of what goes on in classroom discourse patterns should become the basis of our speculations to the extent to which it

> [...] could offer a yardstick for the kind of language aimed at in communicative language teaching and for all aspects of the complex chain of materials, methodology, implementation and evaluation, whatever our order of priority within that chain. (McCarthy 1991:19)

Besides L2 oral competence, students need also acquire competence in writing. Yet, what is immediately striking when it comes down to learning to write in the traditional classroom is the way educational systems have come to conceive of writing activities. Unlike speaking, writing seems to have long been considered not as a developmental process, but assimilated instead to school product norms, and therefore viewed as a school-induced product (Shuy 1988a, Peyton 1988a). The essayist tradition has further contributed to depriving writing of its functional, interactive and self-generated characteristics, requiring learners to begin to write in a formal essayist style without having practiced the developmental stages equivalent to their early steps in oral dialogue and conversation first.[24]

When the natural interactivity of writing is taken away from the writer, the functional use of reading and writing for one's own purposes is lost and reduced to a sterile and demotivating stance throughout the writing experience. The true interactive nature of writer-reader relationship is thus disfigured and turned into a dull and boring activity in traditional product-oriented instruction. Writing (and reading) become a solitary practice not only for students, who are often unassisted, but also for teachers, as most correction work proves (cf. Zamel 1985): learners are left alone in their struggle to master content to pour into appropriate form (Vygotsky 1978, Brodine 1990) and teachers in their attempts to correct form.

Although in-school writing research has shown that writing functionally with real purpose and meaning leads learners to gradually develop more complex morpho-syntactical structures (Peyton 1990a, Peyton 1993) and to perceive the real social nature of language (where not only meaning, but also rapport and face[25] can be negotiated as an aspect of learning) much of the writing carried out in the classroom still focuses on the final product, instead:

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[24] Besides Staton & Shuy (1988), also White (1988, cited in Brodine 1990) stresses the necessity to let learners build on "what they already know and what they can already do."

[25] Brown & Levinson (1978:66) say this about face: "[...] face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face."

> [...] most in-school writing in regular classrooms still does not reflect an effective "writing process" approach which emphasizes children choosing their own topics, having real purposes and a real audience to write to, drafting and revising freely, with the teacher in the role of coach. Most teachers are still teaching and having students use written language the way they themselves were taught. (Staton 1988a:9)

Even activities based on letter writing are generally conceived for writing letters to an imagined or chosen friend who will never receive the letter in question, unless the teacher organizes a real pen-pal correspondence across countries. As yet, writing can play a pedagogically important part in promoting language learning:

> [Writing] gives learners a chance to draw on linguistic knowledge they have acquired – grammatical structures, idioms, vocabulary. They practice what they know; the combination of visual, manual and thinking activities reinforces learning. Writing also takes them beyond "reinforcement." As writers struggle with what they want to say and how to say it, they often discover other ideas or other ways of expressing their ideas. [...] It gives students time to reflect on the language and the conventions they have learned, and time to consider alternatives in order to make the text match their intentions to an extent that is impossible with oral production. Writing involves the construction and – when properly recognized as interactive – the negotiation of meaning which by all accounts is necessary to language acquisition (Ellis 1984), and by some accounts (e.g. Prabhu's) is *the* way language is acquired. (Brodine 1990:11, 29)

As long as writing is viewed as a formal exercise towards mastery of the mechanics of writing — grammar, spelling and punctuation — teachers will hardly become aware of the voice, and therefore acknowledge the potential writer — "the writer as creator" (Johns 1990) — in each learner. Writing in the classroom is often perceived by both teachers and students as a hard, almost impossible enterprise, boring and useless at the same time, because of what participants fail to grasp as to the real purpose connected with this practice:

> At the very heart of the learning process, in fact, are issues of generalizing, seeing relationships, making comparisons, and inferring meaning from disparate sources. Conventional classroom writing simply does not permit this. (Staton & Shuy 1988:212)

The traditional L2 classroom does not seem to be the most appropriate context where the learners are led to experience the normal process of socialization necessary for language learning, and seems instead to have established itself as a practicing ground mainly conceived for educational purposes. With its focus on training for the acquisition of form and stereotypic utterances and emphasis on artificial exchanges often forged at the expense of natural language use, the discourse produced in the classroom, both oral and written, is quite removed from native speaker's standards and experience of the socio-pragmatic contexts in which the language system actually functions. Widdowson (1978:12) states:

> We cannot say that the exchange between teacher and pupils represents a normal instance of language use, but only that it is a teaching device to enable the pupils to establish the signification[26] of a certain structure and certain words in their minds and to provide them with practice by repetition.

Educators might therefore like the idea of inquiring into ways of complementing classroom discourse with a view of developing its productive aspects and conversely contain its negative effects on acquisition. The production of authentic and genuine discourse, both oral and written, is, in the classroom, somehow hindered by classroom organization itself.

1.4 Competence, Capacity and Interactional Ability

In the previous sections, it was argued that as a consequence of the restrictions in language use imposed on the learner by the traditional classroom, development of the language potential to attain target language standards is in all likelihood severely compromised both in oral and written tasks. Analysis of L2 classroom discourse has yielded evidence, in fact, that pedagogic efforts seem to be chiefly deployed to enhance learner competence,[27] traditionally understood as the ability to construct well-conceived grammatical sentences as well as correct, standard utterances. Thus, learners would be hardly exposed to using the language for the normal business of social interaction in school, which means that they are not put in a position to thoroughly understand how the discourse process of natural language use works.

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[26] "Sentences have meaning as instances of usage: they express propositions by combining words into structures in accordance with grammatical rules. We will call this kind of meaning *signification*. The second kind of meaning is that which sentences and parts of sentences assume when they are put to use for communicative purposes. We will refer to this as *value*." (Widdowson:1978:11)

In response to the limitations of Chomsky's theoretical construct of linguistic competence accounting for the language system as an ideal object in abstraction from social life, Hymes (1972)[28] opposes a theory of language which includes a description of the sociocultural components and contextual features a speaker derives and internalizes from his/her social experience in that language:

> Within the developmental matrix in which knowledge of the sentences of a language is acquired, children also acquire knowledge of a set of ways in which sentences are used. From a finite experience of speech acts and their interdependence with sociocultural features, they develop a general theory of the speaking appropriate in their community, which they employ, like other forms of tacit cultural knowledge (competence) in conducting and interpreting social life. [...] We have then to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. (Hymes 1972:277,279)

Hymes's model of communicative competence thus transcends "the notion of ideal fluency" (ibid.) in order to bridge the existing gap in modern linguistics between idealized structure and actual use of a language.

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[27] In Chomsky's (1965) theorization of the competence-performance distinction, competence is defined as a knowledge of the linguistic system or a knowledge of the rules of grammar possessed by an ideal speaker/listener in a homogeneous language community, and performance as a knowledge of the rules of language as actual use (Hymes 1972, Canale & Swain 1980, Widdowson 1983).

[28] Hymes (1972) reacts to Chomsky's strong claim of competence and performance. For an exhaustive discussion of a theoretical framework of a model of communicative competence cf. Hymes (1972) and Canale & Swain (1980).

Canale & Swain (1980) agree with Hymes upon including grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence as essential components of the notion of communicative competence and claim that "an adequate theory of communicative competence" (ibid.) should further integrate strategic competence as an additional and equally important key component.[29] In their view, strategic competence incorporates those communication strategies adopted by the learner to "cope in an authentic communicative situation [and] to keep the communication channel open" (Canale & Swain 1980:25, Tarone & Yule 1989).

Widdowson's warning against the negative consequences that presenting the learner in the classroom with bits of "components of competence" might have on the learning process (cf. 1.2 above) becomes at this point very relevant. In fact, the claim that the acquisition of a language can be resolved through the absorption of ready-made formulas is, in the first place, invalidated by the very nature of language itself. Language is a dynamic force and as such attempting to constrain its potential within static constructs would dissociate learners from the discourse process, and consequently inhibit their ability to cope with the language in more comprehensive terms. Competence cannot therefore be called upon to account for effective language use, precisely because in being itself a theoretical construct, competence would not explain how speakers succeed in going beyond conformity in language behavior to achieve shared communication:

> What the concept of competence does not appear to account for is the ability to create meanings by exploiting the potential inherent in the

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[29] Unlike Hymes (1972), Canale & Swain (1980) exclude psycholinguistic competence from their theoretical model of communicative competence.

> language for continual modification in response to change. (Widdowson 1983:8)

It follows that because the language system cannot always be a matter of total conformity to a model — as traditional classroom teaching seems instead to want to suggest — but calls indeed for incessant interpretation and production of language use, linguistic and communicative competence are inadequate in accounting for language knowledge other than language structure. Thus, speakers' ability to ensure their acts of communication to be meaningful and appropriate — both in reception and in production, and according to the different communicative illocutionary and perlocutionary intentions they invoke — presupposes the existence of an "active force for continuing creativity" (Widdowson 1983:26) which "carries with it the assumption that human beings are in control of their own destiny and exploit the rules at their disposal for their own ends" (Widdowson 1983:8):

> I define capacity as the ability to exploit a knowledge of the conventions of a language and its use for the creation of linguistic behavior which does not conform to type. (Widdowson 1983:11)

Capacity then is the ability that the language user can invoke at all times when confronted with situations lying outside his/her sociolinguistic competence and would therefore be activated by the user in order to successfully overcome his/her L2 limitations and resolve what, at the moment of required actualization, has not yet been codified as competence. In focusing on the learner's active manipulation of language to respond creatively to new situations, capacity appears to bridge the gap between what is acquired and what is virtually in the process of being developed as competence.

It becomes evident at this point that the ability to exploit the language potential for socio-communicative purposes, what Widdowson (1983) has referred to as "communicative capacity" implies an ability to understand how the discourse process functions. Connected with this ability, Widdowson (1983) has also posited a user's "interpretive capacity" to assess the relevance and meanings of "expressions of varying possibility, feasibility, and so on" (Widdowson 1983:25). By the same token, in referring to the way the learner's linguistic resources are actively exploited in the discourse process, the concept of capacity seems to include a user's perspective rather than an analyst's view of language, which is exactly what led Widdowson (1983) to reject the theoretical concept of communicative competence.

In this way, capacity would better reflect the dynamic process accompanying not only language use but the acquisition of language itself as "the natural language analogue of the educational process" (Widdowson 1983:26). From this perspective, capacity seems to adequately account for the infinite creation of meaning — both referential and pragmatic — the learner needs to interpret and use the language creatively and appropriately, and through it, be enabled to elaborate new competence to reach what Widdowson has called "communicative purposes as use":

> If this were not so, there would be no way of explaining how language users are able to produce and interpret innovative expressions which do not conform to established rules and which are, therefore, beyond the scope of their competence. (Widdowson 1983:26)

Thus, if through the exercise of capacity the L2 learner's limited sociolinguistic competence is set in motion to understand and produce language as use, the entire operation is likely to result in successful language use while at the same time being itself enhanced through use. According to Widdowson (1983), capacity promotes learning, being the acquisition of competence activated through the exercise of capacity in discourse.

However, what learners seem to need to successfully reach their communicative purposes is not only a capacity to creatively process the language in reception and creatively draw from the language when need be for the creation of meaning, but also an ability to negotiate interpersonal context so as to bring about affective operations with their interlocutors. The distinction between transactional and interactional speech is found in Brown & Yule (1983:11), who define the former as the "information-transferring function of language," whereas the latter is described as the function aiming at "the maintenance of social relationships [...] where the primary purpose is to be nice to the person [we] are talking to."

It should be noted that rarely when we speak do we manifest the language as individual instances of transactional talk or individual instances of interactional use. Generally, these two aspects of speech intermingle in a linguistic environment which, depending on the interactants' communicative and/or affective intentions, can become predominantly transactional or predominantly interactional. The notion of interactional ability (Aston 1988) seems, thus, to be crucial for a full understanding of what speakers do with the language when they interact in a given speech community:

> To communicate ideas we must generally also establish a minimum of rapport; to establish bonds of personal union through talk we will generally transfer some information, however trite. [...] Interactional speech can also take place in service encounters – just as transactional speech can take place in small talk. (Aston 1988:20,228)

Given the fact, then, that speakers or writers of a language need to feel comfortable with both transactional and interactional talk to meet the world's demands, Aston (1988)[30] criticizes what he still considers a transactional bias in applied linguistics and endorses the full validity of a model of discourse which claims interactional speech to assume communicative value in its own right. Aston (1988:47) traces back to Shannon & Weaver's (1949) model of communication, which sees talk "as primarily a matter of transferring information from one participant to another, rather than a tool in a variety of language games, including the negotiation of rapport," the limits and the inability of applied linguistics to provide a thorough description of discourse.

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[30] McCarthy (1991:137) reports that also "Belton (1988) criticizes what he sees as a tendency in language teaching of the notional-functional school to overemphasize transactional language at the expense of interactional, and makes a plea for a better balance between the two."

Because of a model of communication which treats utterances as conveying a mere illocutionary effect to the hearer (whose major concern is limited to understanding the speaker's intent), interactional use has come to be viewed as subservient to transactional talk and consequently confined to playing a facilitative role in language:

> Pragmatics and discourse analysis offer a bewildering range of theories of language use, but they are almost without exception characterized by the notion that language use is essentially transactional – i.e. first and foremost a matter of information transfer. (Aston 1988:44)

The negative pedagogical implications of this type of discourse model of language are obvious. When the conveyance of a message from A to B is made central in talk, learning comes to be conceived of as a matter of information transfer, as well. Aston (1988) further notes that even the so-called communicative approaches to language teaching have developed in terms of such models, focusing primarily on successful information transfer and making negotiation of meaning the crucial matter in language learning.

> The dominant "communicative approach" has, in its interpretation of the notion of communication, treated the language use as a matter of information transfer. [...] This bias is reflected (a) in its choice of syllabus categories ("functions") [...] (b) in its methodology, which, predicated upon notions such as the "information gap" (Johnson 1982) and "opinion gap" (Rixon 1979), aims to develop communicative

> ability through practice in "negotiating meaning", where by this is intended the successful transfer of information from one participant to another. (Aston 1988:45)

In order to overcome the transactional bias in pedagogy, Aston (1988:81) proposes Krippendorff's (1969) discourse model of language. Here communication is viewed as sharing knowledge and feelings rather than a matter of information transfer. As a result, utterances are considered as being directive and strategic "to constrain the hearer's response" (Aston 1988:49). Convergence is achieved as a negotiated outcome, and therefore both meaning and rapport ratified[31] by the participants in order to bring about perlocutionary effects.

> Instead of a message being passed from A to B, where the latter are conceived as spatially fixed entities, here we see not an exchange between static worlds, but rather [...] worlds in movement towards each other. (Aston 1988:73)

Because improving our worlds, not just in cognitive terms but also (and maybe more compellingly) in affective terms, is fundamental, the benefits the learner would derive from a pedagogy partly based on interactional ability enhancement would thus be in accordance with the needs to bridge the socially affective gaps which may be experienced especially in a second language. Moreover, social interaction is a necessary component of the language acquisition process (Aston 1988:31).[32] Creating authentic interpersonal contexts[33] in the classroom — to help students build an ability to fit in socially, and negotiate rapport as well as meaning in a foreign language — could become an answer to the problem of overcoming the learner's feeling of dissociation from the learning context.

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[31] The terms "ratify" and "ratification" are used in Conversational Analysis to refer to the interlocutor's acknowledgment and support of the previous speaker's turn.

[32] Brown and her colleagues seem to have championed both impracticality and immorality in assisting learners develop interactional ability in school (cf. Aston 1988:32).

[33] Usually situations which make questions of rapport relevant in the school setting do not develop for pedagogical goals and are managed in the L1, at least in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language.

1.5 Dialogue Journals

Interactive writing in student-teacher dialogue journals is a learner-centered activity which has many features to make it potentially interesting for L2 acquisition. The functional, interactive nature of journals involving language use and not mere usage makes them relevant to the assumptions advanced by L2 development theories, whole language approaches to L1 and L2 language acquisition. The activity offers students the opportunity to gain gradual control over the communicative process as they interact freely with a more competent writer who slowly leads them beyond their level of proficiency (Shuy 1988c, 1993) into their "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky 1978). When students are writing for their own purposes, as opposed to writing assignments designated by the teacher, they are more likely to draw on all means at their disposal to get their meaning across effectively.

The practice of dialogue journal writing was started rather accidentally in the early 1960s by Leslee Reed. This Los Angeles sixth grade teacher, whose practice has been extensively documented and analyzed, notably by Joy Kreeft Peyton, Jana Staton and Roger Shuy (Staton, J., Shuy, R.W., Peyton, J.K. & Reed, L. 1988, Peyton, J. & Staton, J. 1993), began asking her students to keep a daily record of their learning experiences and reactions to school activities in order to help them remember what they had done at school that day. Mrs. Reed quickly "became fascinated with the variety of their comments, questions, and observations [...], and soon a dialogue began" (Staton 1988b:39). She therefore invited her pupils to write in a bound journal about topics they deemed most interesting to recount and for her to respond to.

What Mrs. Reed found out was that dialogue journal writing was prompting "language uses not commonly allowed to students in classrooms, such as personal opinions, direct evaluations of lessons and negative as well as positive feelings" (Staton 1988a:4). Mrs. Reed was finally getting authentic voices out of the blank page, something she had never managed to achieve through the usual oral and written modes of classroom discourse. Yet, although the written exchanges were gratifying and enjoyable as well as educationally valuable, the activity encouraged the production of an unconventional kind of prose that

> [...] teachers [had] learned to associate with haste, sloth, incompetence, immaturity, and maybe even anti-establishment radicalism – a certain irreverence manifested in gamey language. (Fulwiler 1987:1)

Indeed, the colloquial language of dialogue journals was but a small breach Mrs. Reed unintentionally opened in the well-established practice of in-school writing with its focus on the final product and therefore on grammatical correctness and coherent text organization.

It was not until the late 1960s, when research and scholarship began doubting the effectiveness of written assignment methodology, that the small-talk style of journal writing started to draw some attention:

> Until very recently, only isolated teachers of native English speakers such as Macrorie (1968) and Elbow (1973) [...] recommended that students write journals. (Spack & Sadow 1983)

At the same time the focus of attention was slowly shifting from the written product to the writing process (cf. Spack & Sadow 1983, Brodine 1990), characterized by a growing concern for the learner's efforts and ways of mastering the L2, thus paving the way to the now largely accepted belief that

> Students learn from making mistakes and half-forming ideas. They learn to think, not by doing exercises in a faddish "critical thinking"

> textbook, but by working their way through real questions, with real interest and real intent. (Macrorie 1987)

Because dialogue journals have come to be valued as a self-generated writing activity, a testing-ground for learners to assess their personalities and education, where motivation is urged by the real-life quality of the established communication, Spack & Sadow (1983:579) can affirm that "today, student journal writing is accepted as an integral part of the curriculum." The genuine exchange called for by the journal appears to be spontaneous and authentic, at least when compared to the traditional patterns of oral and written classroom discourse described in 1.3 above.

But what are interactive journals, or dialogue journals? Dialogue journal writing consists of a written conversation between the learner and the teacher, and can be defined as a writing practice in the context of a natural process of communication. Learners are encouraged to use the language in genuine interaction to discover ultimately that they can actually "do things with words" in a second language:

> A dialogue journal contains a genuine conversation,[34] written rather than spoken, a means by which individual students at any age can carry on a private discussion with their teacher. (Staton 1987:49)

Unlike what happens in the classroom context, therefore, the learner is called on to share with the teacher the control of the communicative event, alternating the roles of initiator and responder. What the journal recreates for students and teachers is a real-life communicative situation "with a purpose, an audience and a message, which allows students to feel comfortable when they write":

> [...] There is general agreement that one of the main reasons student journals succeed is because they establish a dialogue between students,

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[34] "Until recently, the concept of a dialogue belonged entirely to oral interaction. In fact, no one had any idea that a dialogue with genuine two-way responding could occur naturally in writing [...]" (Staton 1987:51).

> who write about what interests them, and teachers, who respond non-judgmentally.[35] (Spack & Sadow 1983:579)

This is in perfect accordance, in fact, with what one of the students in this study pointed out in just her second entry:

> I think this /work/ is interesting because so we learn how to express our ideas without being afraid of what you think of me. (S16/18.10)

If journal writing is to elicit genuine, natural-sounding discourse, with students and teacher as participants in natural "conversations," it would be counterproductive to use dialogue journals to teach, or worse yet, to test correct usage or "skills." Turning them into an overtly pedagogical device risks destroying their potential for authentic language use (Staton 1987, Reed 1993). In fact, Staton specifies:

> It is important to understand that dialogue journal communication is real student-teacher communication, not a writing "assignment." Although many writing skills are practiced in the daily entries, the dialogue journal is not a method of teaching specific writing skills. Instead, the students write about their lives and concerns in order to be understood and often to change something, and the teacher responds to students, not to their writing, for the same reasons. (Staton 1987:52)

The evaluation-free character of the journal may well be what triggers the spontaneity of the interaction itself, turning it into a context-based and message-centered exchange. Since the usual correction/evaluation of the learner's written production is suspended, journals allow students to become better risk-takers, a quality often identified as typical of good language learners (Rubin 1975). They represent a safe place, with fewer institutional constraints, where participants can freely express their personal, social and didactic concerns, and where individuality prevails over formally prescribed attitudes and roles. Moreover, the narrower focus on meaning alone and not on correct form has the advantage of reducing the cognitive overload, typical of L2 production.

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[35] Freeman & Freeman (1989:182) report the experience of whole language teacher Lonna Deeter, who engaged her ESL students in socially meaningful interactive activities in the classroom. Lonna announced that she was not going to grade the students' written elaborations which were part of a more comprehensive interactive activity and found out that "[...] this lack of grading made her students more relaxed about putting their feelings on paper, especially the less able writers."

The opportunity which the learner is given throughout the journal activity to introduce a new topic, to keep one going, or to drop it, is also fundamental for the type of language produced. In fact, in journals learners explore a wide range of functions and strategies, lexico-syntactical structures and conventions in their efforts to communicate with the teacher. The initial blank piece of paper comes to symbolize a "ceremony of democracy" (Macrorie 1987), setting the learner finally free to experience "the sense of feeling safe enough to pour out ideas and thoughts" (Staton 1987:49).

At the same time, while experimenting with the language in dialogue journal writing, students are helped out in the process of becoming more aware of themselves and the surrounding world, turning the learning experience into a real act of discovery:

> Most of all, the journal is the place where the writer can reflect on the relationships between the self and the world and explore the implications of those relationships. (Fulwiler 1987, cited in Dickerson 1987)

The spontaneity characterizing dialogue journals stems from the fact that what they recreate are natural instances of interaction to a degree unusual in regular classroom practice. The journals allow learners to turn the rules of conventional classroom language behavior upside down, to consume a sort of linguistic carnival within the classroom:

> [...] the journals provide a place where a non-threatening dialogue between teacher and student is possible. (Fulwiler 1987:6)

It is evident that dialogue journals contribute to building up a learning context which is richer than the traditional language classroom, in which students and teacher can interact without having to wear their stringent, institutional masks. The ongoing exchanges create a context in which the rigid role distinction between teacher and learner can become more relaxed:

> [...] the journals provide daily opportunities to develop mutuality between teacher and student, increasing the shared understanding of experience, and thus maintaining the common values of respect, trust, and cooperation. (Staton 1988b:37)

The journal thus becomes a rapport-building device which offers to teacher and students an occasion for achieving what Widdowson (1980) has called an alignment of participants' worlds, bringing about a reciprocity of perspectives.

However reciprocal the communicative efforts, it is important to stress that the teacher's decision to give up part of his/her institutional role is essential to the success of the activity:

> The teacher participates fully in [the communicative] process. [...] she writes back as an interested participant, asking clarifying questions to elicit more details, talking about her concerns and feelings, discussing the topics introduced by the students, and introducing topics that she finds interesting. (Staton 1988a:5)

When the teacher is there as true interlocutor, responding and reacting to the students' writing as a real audience, the students, too, are more likely to view their contributions as meaningful and valuable.

As they are given opportunities to build up their identities, they may well acquire their own distinctive voices:

> [...] journals often carry a strong sense of the writer's voice in a way that more formal, transactional or product oriented writing does not. (D'Arcy 1987:45)

At the same time, students are drawing on and consolidating their linguistic and pragmatic knowledge negotiating meaning and rapport and increasing their capacity to exploit that knowledge creatively to meet their communicative needs (cf. 1.4 above). While not only learning to write but also writing to learn in Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" with a more proficient interlocutor, they also begin to make sense of the classroom context as a socially meaningful environment (cf. 4.3 below).

2 Data Collection

2.0 Preliminaries

This study was designed to investigate the features of discourse in the written student-teacher interaction of dialogue journals. It was assumed that such an activity would encourage the negotiation of meaning and roles and that the data would provide potentially interesting evidence of that negotiation. The original plan was not to adopt the activity with my own students, but to analyze dialogue journals produced by other teachers. When it turned out that the other data were not available, I analyzed the data generated in my own classes. While my own participation in producing the data may have influenced the results in ways that cannot be measured, the risk of distortion was reduced by the fact that no analysis was done until after the corpus was complete.[36]

2.1 Collecting the Data

The data for this study consist of 32 dialogue journals produced by students in two classes, one third and one fourth-year class, at a Liceo Linguistico in Northern Italy over one school year (1993/94). The students ranged in age from 16 to 18, and in proficiency, roughly speaking, from intermediate in the third-year class to upper intermediate in the fourth. Each journal comprised the student's entries and the teacher's responses to every entry. The exchanges took place every two to three days in October, then weekly from November on, to become monthly starting January till the end of the year. Each student wrote nine entries in the third-year class and seven entries in the fourth-year class, respectively, for a total of 218 texts (109 for the third-year class and 109 for the fourth-year class), with 217 teacher's responses, for a total of 435 entries, and 54,500 words approximately. There were 5 drop-outs (0.06%), students who for various reasons produced only between 1 and 5 entries.

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[36] Even though the data are my own, in the analysis I refer to myself as the teacher.

The texts were photocopied after each exchange so that the original copies could be kept by the student-writers. Texts were identified as Student (S) or Teacher (T), and given a code number and date of entry. Errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling were not corrected. Coding was used to indicate graphic features that seemed relevant to the analysis, such as paragraph breaks, indentation, strike outs, insertions and straight or wavy underlining (cf. Transcription Conventions above). For example, wiggly underlining was interpreted as indicating the students' uncertainties about the meaning or use of a word[37] and treated accordingly in the teacher's response by offering a possibly correct suggestion. It was also decided to omit markings, such as blotting, for which a clear and immediate explanation could not be offered.[38]

In the beginning, the journal was organized as an activity to prompt free-writing based on a given subject. Students were asked to write about a topic in class for ten minutes on loose-leaf paper. These writings were later collected by the teacher. From the outset, it was emphasized that students should focus on communication, that is, on the message the students wanted to transmit to the teacher rather than correct form. To this end, students were encouraged to avoid breakdowns in the flow of their writing and therefore were told to guess or resort to Italian or another language[39] if necessary. Great emphasis was placed on the fact that the activity was to be regarded as evaluation-free practice, since the teacher's contribution was meant to be that of an ordinary interlocutor and reader and not that of an evaluator. Except for the few students who dropped the activity after a few exchanges, all students seemed to take part in the dialogue journal writing activity willingly and even enthusiastically.

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[37] Very often wiggly underlining was accompanied by a question mark.

[38] The students would sometimes blot out entire words or phrases making them unreadable. Since the analysis could hardly prove whether they were trying to correct form and/or content, or doing some repair work to preserve face, these darkened spaces were ignored in the coding.

After two months of exchanging pieces, the teacher wanted to check an impression she had when responding to the students' journals: though a subject was routinely provided, the students seemed to enjoy getting involved in personal discussions or deviate towards topics of their own choice. She thus stopped assigning topics, and left the subject open: in this way the students would perhaps personalize their messages and explore more natural-sounding forms of communication. Accordingly, students were invited to write about whatever topic they considered worthwhile. It was agreed that the activity from hereon would be carried out at home instead of "borrowing time" in class (cf. Ellis 1984 in 1.2 above) as students and teacher had been doing. The same instructions were to be followed: write fluently for at least ten minutes without a dictionary; use other languages if necessary; focus on meaning rather than form. The activity was thus redefined as "open journal," by which it was meant one which left the students free to choose the topic and treatment.

2.2 The Learners

The students who participated in the dialogue journal activity belonged to two high school classes, namely a third and a fourth year, of a private school, a Liceo Linguistico in Emilia. The third-year class (3A) included 14 students (12 girls and 2 boys), aged 16, except for 3 subjects who were 17. Except for a native speaker of German, who was fluent in Italian, too, all were native speakers of Italian. The fourth-year class (4A) consisted of 18 students, all female aged 17, except for two girls who were 18 and another girl who was 19. At the beginning of the second semester, a new pupil from a different high school and with little proficiency in English was introduced into the class. All students were native Italian speakers except for an exchange student from Norway, who had lived with her family in the United States for one year. Most students had studied English in middle school and were studying either German (31 students) or French (one pupil) as their second foreign language, and Spanish or Japanese as their third foreign language. The students who quit journal writing were the two boys in the third-year class and three girls in the fourth-year class. The boys discontinued the activity after approximately three exchanges; one of the three girls dropped school out at the end of the first semester; the other two produced entries on an irregular basis. Except for one student with health problems, these had all limited proficiency in English, including one who failed the year and had to repeat the grade.

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[39] At the time of the study, the students were attending classes in German, which was compulsory for everybody, and also taking Spanish, French or Japanese as their third foreign language.

2.3 The Teacher's Response Strategies

The funny thing about journal writing is that it all seems to have started as a big misunderstanding, and not only on the students' part. When initiated, the teacher took it for granted that interactive journal writing was going to be a sort of automatic liberation from school constraints and that everything recorded in it would lose this imprint of school rhetoric. But though many of the rules of the game had been subverted — no correction, no evaluation — still nothing like conversation was developing out of such activity at the outset: in no way was the teacher acting differently in the journal from what she was.[40]

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[40] When I later started to analyze the data, it was embarrassing and disappointing for me to realize that in the early entries I had very often played the teacher's part just when I thought

When the journal activity commenced, no formal presentation was given about the purpose of the journals. They were instead incorporated as part of the curriculum as a good exercise that would improve their ability to write in English. With the first assigned subject, students were left to cope alone with the possible meanings of dialogue journals and possible ways of writing in them. No model was provided to follow for both the students and teacher.

Perhaps the main concern a teacher is confronted with when organizing a genuine communication activity like interactive journal writing is how to engage students in authentic discussions and avoid communication failure. As previously mentioned, to make sure the students would welcome the idea of communicating through dialogue journals and write extensively about mutually generated topics in a one-to-one conversation, the teacher decided to start by providing them with subjects about their learning experience of the day and hoped to generate interesting feedback. The students were given topics, such as "One thing I have learnt today" or "One thing I'm still wondering about." These were hoped to generate fluid, conversation-like interaction.

After a few exchanges, the teacher realized that the writing lacked the spontaneity of natural conversations, which she had hoped the correspondence-like format of the activity would prompt. Although, she got feedback from the students, it was in the form of very diligent replies duly turned in after the allotted time had expired. The teacher would then promptly respond, trying to acknowledge most topics, but too often she found herself re-stating the students' entries, contributing little to any sort of individualized personal exchange. Although it was made

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I was behaving most naturally instead. My institutional role was so ingrained in the convictions and behaviors my students and I shared about school and expected from the classroom context that now I guess one just grows unaware of classroom attitudes.

clear from the very beginning that the journal was to be considered extra practice and that none of it would ever be corrected or evaluated, it was evident that the students were experiencing the activity as an additional testing instrument in the teacher's hands, a further controlling move employed with the purpose of assessing their school performance. The teacher's intentions must not have been clear enough in the students' minds, and in all likelihood the teacher had not come to terms with journal writing herself.

But how genuine were the teacher's intentions? If, on the one hand, the teacher was taking great care to avoid overt correction, as promised, on the other, she was regularly employing the widely-used dialogue journal response strategy of modeling correct English for forms students had used incorrectly. But because it is often hard to create natural-sounding comments around pre-determined models, at bottom, the students and teacher were still trapped in traditional classroom tasks and roles, and their stilted language reflected the asymmetry[41] of their "positional" roles, although the students' entries were being collected in a folder labeled "Conversations with the teacher."

In order to minimize the constraints imposed on discourse by positional roles, the students and teacher needed to work together if they were to go beyond the sort of institutionalized communication[42] they expected to find in the classroom, and experiment with more natural and varied communicative patterns and less asymmetrical discourse roles. In any event, the journal was a new genre for both the students and teacher. In it they would have to explore and construct limits and rules jointly, since they had no body of established journal conventions to guide them. Through the dialogue journal activity, they would learn that "the ability to control the actions of others is not so much emergent from the structure of the transactional relationship itself [...] rather it is a property of the successful management of meaning and presentation of self by a political actor" (Kapferer 1976:9, cited in Goody 1978b:3).

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[41] Tannen (1990) defines asymmetry in talk as reflecting participants' perception of their different status (whether based on hierarchy, age, gender, personality, or other factors), so that one participant is "one-up" and the other "one-down". Symmetry, by contrast, emphasizes sameness and connection between the interlocutors. In school settings, hierarchical positional roles generally prevent teachers and students from experimenting with symmetrical L1 or L2 discourse roles.

[42] In 1932, Waller theorized the preservation of social distance between the teacher and his/her pupils as being efficient in the teaching-learning relationship. Though it has been widely recognized that preservation of rigid social roles hinders communication in the classroom (Goody 1978b), Italy is still a country where the social distance between student and teacher is generally rather great.

The teacher gradually began to adopt a more personal tone, making her responses a true reflection of her interests, and showed support by openly revealing her sympathy for the students. Very rarely did she introduce themes. She would instead comment about the students' entries trying to behave as a co-participant in the building up of discourse, providing suggestions, personal information or topic expansions. With these types of comments, the teacher hoped to add to the sense of respect, mutual trust and responsibility with each of them as a basis for their classroom life relationship. In short, the teacher tried to follow Grice's (1975) basic maxims of conversation: to be informative, relevant, truthful and clear.

She also worked to abandon the role of potential chastiser, which very often overlaps with the stance of corrector. In the early phases, the teacher's responses betrayed, in fact, an overly consciousness of form and were less in tune with meaning, which translated into peremptory and magisterial tones, typical of the teacher. As the year progressed, her goal was to show the students that she was not simply interested in controlling and evaluating them.[43] As Brodine has said:

> It is the correcting stance itself which distorts the communicative role, and gives the students the sense that they are not writing for anyone, least of all themselves. (Brodine 1990:26)

At a certain point, the exchanges became much more involving, and because of this, the teacher found herself concentrated on writing relevant messages rather than correcting mistakes.

While the teacher was striving to interweave a meaningful and genuine conversation with her students, through the negotiation of a new genre, she also became conscious that they had begun to construct a new rapport together (cf. 4.1 and 4.2 below). Thanks to the journal activity, they had set out to turn the traditional classroom into a more open, non-threatening and democratic environment and day after day the students and teacher were getting signs and indications that this time they had chances to succeed.[44]

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[43] I was starting to dislike the artificiality of trying to include in my responses correct reformulations of my students' errors, though I do not know how conscious this decision of abandoning affected reformulations was.

[44] During my career as a teacher, I had been seeking ways to go beyond school boundaries. I introduced the notion of social life in the classroom by organizing extra-curricular activities with my students. However, I had only in part succeeded in establishing a genuine relationship with my students owing to time and cultural constraints.

3 Analysis

3.0 Preliminaries

This is a study of how two classes of English as a foreign language which engaged in interactive writing with their teacher gradually developed conversation-like contributions in their journals as an interactional outcome.[45] That is, the participants' increased responsibility throughout the year to include more of their conversational partners' communicative needs into the ongoing exchange translated into more collaboration in the production of meaningful and relevant messages. The focus on message not only kept the interaction going but was also crucial to convert the pre-given patterns of classroom discourse into more natural procedural forms of negotiation.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the discourse features of interactive journals as used with high school students over the course of a year and to show, among other things, the ways they seemed to be trying to "co-operate to sustain the conversation and establish understanding" (Goffman 1974, cited in Scarcella & Higa 1981). In other words, the analysis will attempt to document the development and changes of the discourse features of the journals over time and the different levels of success the students and teacher were able to achieve in maintaining an extended conversation over several turns in a learning context which does not specifically provide for social talk (cf. 1.2 and 1.3 above).

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[45] Research on dialogue journal practice conducted in the United States seems to support evidence that the genre in itself is not so controversial in the teacher and students' minds. The literature confirms, in fact, that dialogue journals are normally treated as genuine conversation by the interactants right from the start. What I will suggest in this study, instead, is that my students and I had to carry out considerable negotiation before we could understand what was required of each of us in the interaction and before we could remove the prejudice which prevented journals from being exchanged and accepted as a more genuine channel of communication.

It has been widely noted, in fact, that in interactions occurring outside the school setting, negotiation of the pragmatic concerns related to the joint production of meaning is the rule. At the same time, participants also tend to attend closely to the social implications of their behavior in contributing to the development and the advancement of an ongoing interaction through role negotiation (many authors, including Garfinkle 1967, Goffman 1974, Grice 1975, 1978, Levinson 1983, Lee 1987, Aston 1988, Calò 1990). Now, if we define conversation as

> [...] that familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, law courts, classrooms and the like (Levinson 1983:284)

it seems likely that the sociolinguistic norms operating in the classroom tend to preclude conversation as conforming to classroom discourse. In fact, activities carried out in the classroom context that extend beyond the culturally accepted teacher-students' roles are predominantly re-interpreted according to what participants consider appropriate to traditional classroom discourse, unless the interactants manage to jointly negotiate a different type of role relationship.

Dialogue journal writing appears instead to offer teacher and students a means to successfully generate meaningful and socially acceptable "written conversations" within the classroom context. These occur because of journal writing's communication patterns, which include individual-to-individual instead of teacher-to-class interaction, development of topics chosen by the interlocutors rather than imposed, and evaluation-free interaction (cf. 1.5 above). Thanks to the communicative potential inherent in the dialogue journal practice, due mainly to it being "a written connection to spoken competence" (Staton & Shuy 1988:199, Peyton 1988a, Shuy 1988a), teacher and students may get involved in the joint construction of written discourse, creating the conditions which not only govern social talk in real life, but which make it occur in the first place.

Although dialogue journals are distinctive for being a joint effort carried out over time, for the sake of convenience and to better illustrate some of the features of the discourse, students' and teacher's entries have been treated in two separate sections.

Among the many possible methodological approaches available for analysis, the tools chosen here to describe the data have been partially adapted from Conversational Analysis (CA). As a "written interaction partak[ing] of the discourse forms of oral speech such as asking direct questions, turn taking, and sharing important information" (Staton & Shuy 1988:200), the dialogue journals have produced interactive and conversational features which warrant an approach in conversational terms. A number of the tools of analysis of CA proved, in fact, helpful in identifying the elements to be examined in the study at hand, and consequently contributed to the understanding of the discourse structure of the data themselves: recipient design theory, adjacency pair structure, such as question-answer, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance or rejection, story-story could also be applied to written discourse, even though they were primarily designed for use on oral data. A taxonomy accounting for the learners' and teacher's sociolinguistic moves was formulated as a departing point for the discussion contained in the next sections.

3.1 Interactive Features in the Journal Activity

The present teacher-student written interaction could be characterized as a story of increasing discourse complexity. The development which can be seen in most of the journals involved increases in the range and frequency of some types of discourse features. It should be emphasized, however, that the teacher's aim is not to look for plausible reasons for this, but rather to describe the structural changes of the texts, which are responsible for the conversational style the journals developed during the year.

Even at an impressionistic level, the differences between the first entries and the later ones are striking. As the year progressed, both the students' entries and the teacher's messages became longer and more interesting. Besides length, the journals were also building up a sort of crescendo in the way their structure was being organized. This was mainly due to the expectations created by the authentic sociolinguistic implications of the journal, which were gradually making both teacher and students more aware of the pragmatic consequences of their own behavior. In fact, the students' entries were not the only ones to reveal a radical change. A turning point in the interaction seems to have been the teacher's decision to relinquish consciously the "teacherly" tone in favor of a more natural form of conversation.

The degree of involvement and responsibility students and teacher were developing depended upon the degree of real-life interaction and authenticity the students and teacher were imparting to their entries. These entries were being shaped more and more by their emerging discourse needs, while interactive and conversational features started to appear in the texts. More specifically, through the turn-taking format of the journals, the students and teacher were displaying a willingness to create messages typical of unique, irreplaceable interlocutors for an ongoing communicative event. This sociolinguistic investment in achieving mutually satisfactory communication deeply affected the whole interactive process: the conversational work conducted to secure the attention of an exclusive interlocutor generated a series of reciprocal adjustments, which enhanced the communicative value of the exchanges.

The interactive and conversational features selected for analysis are those that seem to reveal most clearly the gradual transformation of discourse which, in the early stages, took the form of a carefully and purposefully constructed school assignment produced to display correct language and to meet the teacher's expectations (cf. 3.2 below). By the end of the year, however, the journal activity had broken out of that rigid mold. In the meantime, teacher and students had become aware that the impersonal, scholastic and ambiguous tone typical of traditional classroom language no longer suited their communicative purposes. The elements contributing to more natural-sounding communication include:

1. The emergence of first pair parts of adjacency pairs; for example, questions, complaints, thank-you moves, apologies, greetings, offers, etc.
2. Changes in narrative discourse: the emergence of stories
3. Negotiatory work when introducing new topics
4. Changes in topic treatment: discussing personal topics
5. Entries especially designed for the particular recipient
6. Dialogic continuation of topics across turns rather than monologic entries

Although the elements under investigation may sound like the norm among speakers for whom having a conversation means nothing less than making interactive choices to select behaviors, it should be emphasized that within the classroom setting the language learners are used to using is influenced and conditioned by a limiting context which prevents teacher-student interactions from using any but a very small range of patterns of language used outside the classroom.

It is argued here that the above-listed interactive and conversational features reflect the increased pragmatic complexity of journal writing. Because the dialogue journal teaches the students that writing is not only a cognitive activity but also an authentic social activity, it may go a long way toward promoting the production of pragmatically appropriate exchanges as a classroom activity. That language use has its pragmatic side, involving tact, politeness, and "doing things with words" is not exactly a discovery[46] for the participants, who already know from their mother tongue how a language works in the real world. It may well represent, however, a real conquest in the foreign language classroom for students to attain together with their teacher:

> Through the dialogue journals the teacher and students develop a relationship that is mediated by continuous writing. This type of task supports the notion of writing as a social activity and allows the student to develop a sense of audience in his/her writing. Not only does the student control the writing, he or she begins to view writing as an authentic means of communication. (Ulanoff 1993:2)

The next sections will discuss in more detail the way this teacher-student interaction embodies the participants' firm engagement to invest "minds and souls" in open lines of communication through the written page and consequently acknowledge discourse as a joint enterprise.

3.2 The Students' Journal Entries

Analysis of the data has yielded evidence that three main groups of students and relevant sociolinguistic behaviors can be identified in the journals. Let us refer to group A as those who develop interactivity and approach conversation-like modes of expression in their journals in the course of the year; group B are those who show only timid attempts at overcoming the models of exchange typical of the traditional classroom setting; group C are those who never develop interactivity at all throughout an entire year of dialogue journal activity.

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[46] It is evident that L2 learners have drawn on their L1 communicative and pragmatic competence in order to negotiate conversational outcomes in the journals.

Interactivity refers to the negotiatory process which, as was said in sections 1.2 and 1.3 above, seems to characterize classroom talk only minimally. And yet interlocutors rely on their own and each other's ability to negotiate meaning and roles in order to assess information and interpret the social import of interactions so as to contribute, in turn, relevant and acceptable messages as they construct discourse together:

> By interactive discourse, we mean discourse which is the collaborative construct of two or more participants mutually engaged in other-directed communicative behavior. (Riley 1979, cited in Holec 1980:193)

This means that interactants are not only utterance producers, but that they also become analysts of their own speech forms and above all of other participants' talk. Namely, the features which called for the teacher's and students' unconscious analysis to process discourse in the journals in order to reach convergence will be considered interactive elements of this written exchange, and taken here as a basis for the conscious researcher's work by virtue of the fact that

> Conversation, as opposed to monologue, offers the analyst an invaluable analytical resource: as each turn is responded to by a second, we find displayed in that second an analysis of the first by its recipient. Such an analysis is thus provided by participants not only for each other but for analysts too. (Levinson 1983:321)

In accordance with what is stated above, then, the criteria used to discriminate Students A from Students C are the quantity of interactive and conversational features developed in the data, and which are likely to account for the change from what, in the beginning, seemed to resemble written assignment to the final conversational tone[47] achieved by the end of the year. Learners have been classified into three categories comprised between the two extremes of a continuum of learner behavior: Students A are those who developed at least one feature from each category. Those students who developed a minimum of at least one interactive feature throughout the year from any category have been grouped under Students B. Students C did not display any of the interactive elements identified in the journals. The tables below show the students' indicators of interactivity in their journals.

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[47] Levinson (1983:318) distinguishes a conversation from conversational activity. Most of the data in question can be considered conversational activity rather than true conversations

Third-year Class	Group A	Group B	Group C
S01		X	
S02		X	
S03		X	
S04			X
S05		X	
S06			X
S07		X	
S08		X	
S09	X		
S10		X	
S11		X	
S12	X		
S13			X
S14		X	

Table 3.1: Indicators of students' interactivity in the journal activity for the Third-year Class.

– if only because they are written. Nevertheless, their authenticity of tone makes some of these interactions real conversation.

Fourth-year Class	Group A	Group B	Group C
S15		X	
S16	X		
S17		X	
S18			X
S19		X	
S20		X	
S21	X		
S22	X		
S23			X
S24		X	
S25			X
S26		X	
S27			X
S28			X
S29	X		
S30		X	
S31	X		
S32			X

Table 3.2; Indicators of students' interactivity in the journal activity for the Fourth-year Class.

The data suggest that interactive writing is not automatically communicative in itself. It is not enough to announce in class: "We are about to start a revolutionary activity today!" This is not credible. Authentic behavior does not belong to the essential nature of the learning/teaching process. As Vanett (1990:53) argues,

> The traditional relationship between teacher and student is often reduced to that of assignment giver and assignment completer, or evaluator and grade seeker.

The journal entries in this study seemed to mirror the students' contradictory feelings about the steps to be taken in the interaction. The students would, for example, start to develop the subject of the entry, summing up the content of the lesson and accidentally — it may be argued — slip in their own thoughts, reflections and doubts, as illustrated by the following excerpts:

> ONE THING I HAVE LEARNED TODAY [...] For example I think I'm more sure about the clase between the ing form or the infinitive without to. Of course I have learnd new words and that's really important, I think, because you can speak more fluently. I notice that when I am at home and sometimes I try to speak only English and I see that it's very, very difficult to find an expressions that can ~~esprimere~~ be ~~espressa~~ <A> say <a> by <A> an only <a> word. Anyway I notice that in this way I can know if I improve my English and I'm happy when at the end of my conversation I could say always something more. Infact I'm really very happy to study English, I like it so much but sometimes I'm afraid that I could never be as good as I'd like. <S14/13.10>
>
> <U> One Thing I have learned Today <u> <p> Today I've ~~listened to CNN,~~ watched a report on CNN; it was about the separation of siamese twins. <p> It was a very hard operation (in fact there is only 5% of success in carring out this type of surgery), but the pediatric surgeon was able to cut through the levers of the infants. <p> It hasn't been difficult to listen to the report, but the pronunciation changes some words, so often I can't understand if it's one word or another one. I have a very little vocabulary, but I like the language very much and I want to improve, so I think and I hope I'll be able to handle the challenge! <S10/20.10>

If correction and subsequent evaluation by the teacher of their learning efforts were crucial to classroom procedures, it was difficult for the teacher to restrain from evaluating the students' entries. How would a teacher's decision not to correct and evaluate his/her pupils' "homework" be perceived? Would the claim be believed? Though the titles were never formulated as questions, but rather designed to elicit free writing, the students still seemed to expect scrutiny, as confirmed by reactions of the following type:

> I don't know, I think I've understood everything about your lesson. [...] But first of all I've to study, next time I'll answear your question. [...] <S22/20.10>

Some of them considered the journal as additional classroom practice, not as communication as the next example demonstrates:

> [...] Today I don't know what can I write, so I think is better, if I stop here my exercitation. <S08/20.10>

Needless to say, the journal continued to represent a written assignment for the students and the teacher continued to be perceived as the judge and evaluator. Because of this, the communicative value of the journals remained questionable. A typical beginning entry would, for instance, consist of a list of words and expressions dealt with during class explanations, as here:

> Write down one thing that you have larned today. <p> perishing: extremely cold <L> spot = to see, to watch something <l> herds of camcorder-touting tourist = tourist carrying a video camera. <p> These are some words and expressions that I've learned today during the two English hours. We have read a copy about a trip in Rajasthan and these are the expression that have <WU> mainly <wu> colpito me. <S22/11.10>

> Write down one thing that you've learned today. <p> Today, during the english lesson I've learned the significance of a lot of words. I've discovered one thing that I didn't know, I mean that crimson. is a colour. [...] <S31/11.10>

or a list of pieces of information, as here:

> <U> One Thing I have learned Today <u> <p> Today I've ~~listened to CNN,~~ watched a report on CNN; it was about the separation of siamese twins. <p> It was a very hard operation (in fact there is only 5% of success in carring out this type of surgery), but the pediatric surgeon was able to cut through the levers of the infants. [...] <S10/20.10>

> "One thing that I've learnt today" <p> Today I've learned that Medioeval dramas were performed on waggons called pageants, because the actors moved from village to village to develope to everyone the religious messages. I found quite interesting too, that this performances lasted a whole day. [...] <S18/18.10>

Very often the students would fill their pages with accounts of morpho-syntactical rules, the focus of our discussions on that day:

> One thing I have learned today <p> Today I have learned the difference between the -ing form and the simple present. [...] <S08/13.10>

> "One think I have learned today" <p> Today the lesson was very interesting I undesterdood the use of some verbs (like + ing like + to) and <A> the meaning of <a> some new words like (land take off). the teacher have corrected my homework. I've made some mistakes. [...] <S12/13.10>

The texts were clearly marked by a desire to prove worthy in the teacher's eyes and revealed the students' underlying efforts to fulfill their duties as learners on the one hand and follow the teacher's directions on the other. They were trying hard to measure up to the teacher's expectations and were behaving not as genuine interlocutors but as model learners of English working on a given assignment. This is not surprising in view of the fact that most of their school interactions took place within rather narrow constraints (cf. 1.3 above). As Goody observes,

> Communication with [teachers, policemen, judges, bank managers, doctors and social workers] is pre-structured by the imputation to them of controlling intentions. [...] These are all roles in our society which carry the right to chastise and admonish, and from whose incumbents one quite expects such messages – indeed anticipates them. (Goody 1978b:15)

Because the imputation of intention seems to be inscribed within social status, the meaning the students were attributing to the journal activity was largely dependent on the rules governing student-teacher roles. In citing a study conducted by Boggs (1972), Goody (1978b:42) suggests that "where there is an emphasis on preserving status differentials it will be difficult to separate the report and command functions of verbal communication." The students were therefore simply and quite naturally behaving in ways they felt were appropriate to the respective roles. They were evidently keeping their dialogue journal communication within the norm by adhering to the familiar, pre-determined forms of classroom interaction, based on asymmetrical teacher-student roles. In short, the teacher's instructions to "write freely" were being interpreted according to the social rules operative in the classroom context, which called for status inequality.

This may shed light on why, in the beginning, the students interpreted the proposal of doing journals not as an opportunity for genuine communication activity, but merely another written assignment. Their journal entries were not collaborative the way social talk usually is, and had little in common with authentic interaction. That is, the students were not generating interactive and conversational elements, however strongly the teacher urged them to communicate naturally. In fact, only a few students gradually developed awareness that it was possible to communicate in a way that was not completely role-bound.

3.2.1 Emergence of First Pair Parts

One basic tenet of CA is that naturally occurring interactions are socially organized. This means that when co-participants orchestrate their sociolinguistic behaviors, they rely on patterns aiming at the joint construction of orderly and relevant conversations (Lee 1987, Calò 1990). For this reason, these are made up of sequences which are assumed to be "occurring one after the other, or [to be] in some before and after relationship, [or to] have some organization as between them" (Sacks 1987:54); that is, conversational efforts tend to create a shared conversational order.

Scholars working in the area of CA have identified "the kind of paired utterances of which question-answer, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance, apology-minimization, etc., are prototypical" (Levinson 1983:303) as being the fundamental sequence of conversational organization (Levinson 1983, Sacks

1987). In fact, not only do they create an expectation, but they are also "deeply inter-related with the turn-taking system as techniques for selecting a next speaker" (Levinson 1983:303). As a result, the presence of a first part of an adjacency pair makes relevant the production of a second pair part, which should be attuned with the interpretation derived from analysis of the previous turn by the recipients.

If it is the case, as seems plausible from the evidence reported above, that the emergence of first pair parts calls into play a joint communicative effort between the participants so as to produce meaningful and relevant messages, it is thus possible to consider the emergence of first pairs in the students' journal activity as interactive features in their own right, accounting, to a large extent, for the conversion of the self-contained pieces of writing of the initial period into the more interactive and jointly constructed entries which the participants begin shaping together throughout the year.

Yet, one might object that written interaction involves different conversational constraints on the participants, than say, an oral exchange. To give just one example, it is easy to elude a second pair part in a non-face-to-face interaction where "adjacency pairing is only partially operative" (Peyton 1988b:169). This section will give special attention not to whether adjacency pairing has been regularly observed across turns and how many times it has, but to the procedures through which students and teacher gradually develop awareness that the journal activity can offer them different opportunities in discourse terms from classroom assignment models, and how these discourse opportunities were exploited and managed throughout the exchange.[48]

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[48] Like turn-taking, adjacency pairs operate locally across two turns and therefore make up for what conversationalists have termed the local management system in conversation (Levinson 1983:297,308). Aston (1988:251) notes that "the discourse processes by which

Questions

Questions are widely accepted as an intrinsic feature of classroom discourse management and are chiefly used by the teacher to direct and control the learning process. Long before the teacher-pupil relationship is established in school, mothers and caretakers have already exposed their children to a large amount of questioning even during the pre-verbal stage, at least in Western societies, where children become very skilled in asking questions as early as they can utter their first words in their first language (Goody 1978b, Keenan, Schieffelin & Platt 1978). It has, in fact, been demonstrated that "training questions" (ibid.) are believed to mold the individual's attitude towards questions later in life and that they constitute the basis for managing questions in that language. Question-asking has important implications in the acquisition of a second language, too. If learning is assumed to take place through interaction (cf. 1.1 above), it will not be difficult to recognize that questions play a significant role also in classrooms.

The question-answer format, in fact, is "a prime example of adjacency pairing" (Goody 1978b:23), whose most immediate socio-pragmatic implications are to be sought in the relevant and compelling consequences on conversational organization. That is, we ask questions to get new information, and when asked questions we feel responsible for providing a suitable answer.[49] Questioning reflects our interest and degree of involvement towards something or somebody and therefore promotes interaction. It is an incomplete move and as such it seems to function as a social device "for compelling interaction — for forcing two people to enter into a social exchange" (ibid.), and

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interactional speech is realized," what can be identified as "the building blocks of interactional speech" itself, "is to be found at a relatively local level, [...] structural sequences such as the conversational analysts' adjacency pairs" (cf. 4.1 below).

[49] Not all questions are requests for information; there may be lack of correspondence, in fact, between form and function (Hymes 1972a, reported in Goody 1978b).

because "questioning binds two people in immediate reciprocity" (ibid.), it might also have consequences on the rapport that may ensue between the interactants (cf. 4.1 and 4.2 below).

However, within the classroom context, question asking remains a traditional prerogative of the teacher as well as a tool for assessing student's knowledge and exerting control (Peyton 1988b, Peyton 1993, Ellis 1984,1994). In most cases, the teacher's questions are still organized around a three-part question-answer-feedback format (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975) and pragmatically imprinted with artificiality, leading the students astray from authentic language use (Widdowson 1978:96). Studies confirm that:

> teachers produce more than 95% of the utterances in classrooms, that only 3% of the students' utterances are questions (most of which are procedure questions) while about one-third of the teacher's utterances are questions (information or assessment questions). In addition, teachers spend about one-third of the time evaluating student responses and another third of their time giving directives and managing. (Staton & Shuy 1988:211)

Even when students' questioning does occur, the content of their questions is somehow related to topics the teacher has already introduced (Peyton 1988b). In addition, questioning seems to require on the part of the students a certain ability to avoid possible pragmatic misunderstanding. In fact:

> although students may and do ask questions in the classroom, they must display a certain degree of deference in doing so, so as not to create the impression that they are demanding a reply or putting the teacher on the spot. (Peyton 1988b:163-164)[50]

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[50] Questioning is in itself a potentially face-threatening act (Goody 1978b:39) and is normally associated with imposition on the part of the asker (Widdowson 1978:97). However, in asymmetrical communication, participants in subordinate roles may resort to different modes of questioning in order to get through the sequence in a pragmatically acceptable way. In the classroom, for example, I have noted that students seem to feel that their questioning is particularly inappropriate and tend to avoid formulation of direct questions "fixing responsibility or threatening control" (Goody 1978b:39). They instead very often activate strategies to take this responsibility upon themselves and get exposed to a possible loss of face personally.

The sources mentioned refer largely to questions in oral interaction, but students' questions are presumably even less frequent in writing.

The first thing to be noted in the study at hand is that the students ask more questions than the teacher. The emergence of a significant number of questions in the students' texts and the students' enhanced responsibility throughout the exchange for answering the teacher's questions is, in fact, one of the characterizing features of the dialogue journals. The questions in this corpus were abstracted for analysis on the basis of their form and not their function and consequently referred to only as grammatical units, either direct or indirect. Analysis of the data reveals that:

1) The students ask 59% of the questions, the teacher only 41%.

2) The teacher does not control the interaction through questions; most of her questions being Responding questions. Students do control initiation, as the majority of their questions are Initiating questions.[51]

3) The teacher does not test students' knowledge through questions. Only a very limited percentage (13%) of the teacher's questions are language or subject-related questions (display questions). Rather, most seem to be asked with a view of having the students reflect on the problem and eventually solve it.[52]

4) The students' questions apparently aim at obtaining new information, usually not related to school.

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[51] Peyton (1988b) classifies questions according to the function they perform in initiating a new topic (Initiating Questions) or responding to a topic initiated by the student or the teacher (Responding Questions).

[52] For an exhaustive discussion of questions cf. Peyton (1988b, 1993). It might be of interest to note that the results discussed by the researcher in her study are all in all confirmed by the illustration contained in this section.

Student and teacher questions increased in number throughout the year, as specified below:[53]

Teacher	Total Questions	Oct. thru Dec. (N° 4 exchanges)	Jan. thru May (N° 4 exchanges)
Total	**45**	**15**	**30**

Table 3.3: Number of Teacher Questions

Students	Total Questions	Oct. thru Dec. (N° 4 exchanges)	Jan. thru May (N° 4 exchanges)
Total	**66**	**11**	**55**

Table 3.4: Number of Student Questions

As can be seen from the figures above, teacher questions double in time, moving from a number of 15 questions in the first part of the year up to a number of 30 questions at the end of the school year. But when compared to students' data, the increase in teacher questions is dramatically smaller: student questions increased by approximately 5 times over the course of the school year.

Quite understandably, the journals show that whereas the teacher often initiates the asking of questions, students are more reluctant to do so in the early journal entries, mainly confining themselves to indirect questions, which implies that they believed a straightforward confrontation with the teacher was inappropriate.[54] Indeed, because they are less direct, indirect questions reduce the interlocutor's obligation to respond and are therefore more acceptable in conversational terms, especially in asymmetrical interactions. The questions in the example below are typical of the early entries:

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[53] This analysis of teacher's and students' questions refers to findings in a sample of 16 journals selected randomly.

> One thing I'm still wandering about <p> I know that the relationship betweene parents and children sometimes is difficult, but I don't understand why my father needs to speak aloud when he isn't agree with me. We can discuss in a civil way... I suppose it's quite normal... but he always needs to urlare and than he stops speaking and goes in an other room to watch TV. And I stay alone in the kitchen. Not very nice! <S15/20.10>

The above entry is significant in many respects. If we accept that "verbal forms are not sufficient as a basis for determining meaning, [since] interpretation of meaning must depend in part on rules governing social relationships" (Goody 1978b:20), then we might allow that the student did not want to describe a state of affairs for the sake of it but was instead trying to perform some kind of perlocutionary act at the same time. So, assuming for the moment that S15's intention is to elicit a reaction from the teacher, we may as well concede that she cannot, pragmatically speaking, ask for the teacher's opinion directly without causing some embarrassment. The student then chooses to work on sentence structure to involve her reader gradually. She begins by stating a general fact: "the relationship betweene parents and children sometimes is difficult." She then goes on restricting the focus of her topic and makes the point: "I don't understand why my father needs to speak aloud when he isn't agree with me." Finally, she closes her entry by means of an evaluative "Not very nice!" after giving herself a tentative explanation for this behavior. Meanwhile, she has already formulated her indirect question — to note that this is also her point — and gets a response from the teacher:

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[54] The same can be said of rhetorical questions. Unlike indirect questions, these tend to emerge rather late in the journals but, often, are among the first types of questions formulated by the students. This might be due to the mild imposition rhetorical questions have on the interlocutor. It is common experience, in fact, to resort to rhetorical questions to re-state concepts or lay emphasis on them, rather than eliciting a real response.

> Parents-children relationships can be very hard to manage. When you live with somebody it's normal to argue and have different points of view. I understand you don't find it nice when your father shouts and yells at you. Maybe you can try to talk to him. Why don't you explain to him that you would rather discuss things nicely? You should also consider the fact that perhaps your father is short of temper and loses his patience easily. [...] <T01/20.10>

Whether this was the reaction the student wanted to obtain we can hardly say. What is apparent is that this student seems to demonstrate good knowledge of the social norms of the classroom context. It seems likely that the student's goal was that of having the teacher take a stand on her family problem and provide a possible explanation. But because she knows that this clashes with the social norms in the classroom, S15 is very cautious about putting the teacher on the spot by asking an overt question, and manages to keep at a proper distance the teacher's direct involvement into a rather personal and possibly embarrassing topic. She, in fact, succeeds in pursuing her communicative intentions by first building up a structural climax in her turn, and most importantly, by formulating her question as if she were thinking aloud, thus avoiding direct exposure. A few months later, however, the same student appears to be daring more when eliciting a response from the teacher by means of direct questions:

> Now I'm in my room, listening to the radio. I feel...exhausted, depressed, I don't know. <p> I'd like to be a little ~~child~~ baby and to ~~be~~ live in a golden-~~plac~~ palace, miles away from the whole word. I know that my problems aren't very "big", but for me have bad marks at mathematics is a real disaster. I don't know how to tell <A> it <a> to my father and how to give him my schoolreport. What will he say to me? Oh God, I hope he wan't yell (urlare?) too much, because when he yells I begin to cry and...ooh, why ~~I'm no can~~ //am I not// able to be good at maths? <S15/07.02>

This time, besides still some indirect questioning used to state the point, we are here confronted with the emergence of full-status questions. It should be noted, nevertheless, that both direct questions are once again not overtly directed to the teacher. S15 relies heavily on dramatic effect to get her interlocutor's involvement, since direct questioning may as yet be regarded as a strongly imposing act on the teacher's part. Thus, the student waits to get the next response from the teacher before proceeding further.

What this student's following turn displays is, in fact, an explosion of personal questions directed explicitly to the teacher in two ways: the sensitivity of the topic has increased, and the student is desiring a more personal response from the teacher:

> I'd like to ask you about people and specially about "friends". Do you think they feel a particular joy to "walk over" the heart of other people? And do friends feel good or happy to narrate all your "secrets" to the only people you didn't wanted to know it? I can't really stand this thing, that <WU> way of live <wu> is hypocrite and despicable. I mean, if you think someone has, for example, a orrible dress, why do you say it's nice? Shut up, it's better! And if you know that someone can't stand another person, why many people need to tell it and make them quarrel? I think this is wrong, we should try to make everybody happy by helping them to <WU> get on well <wu> //andare d'accordo// with eachother. Are you agree with me? Has a friend ever been so bad with you? What did you do? <S15/07.02>

Here S15 is actually putting the teacher on the spot: "Are you agree with me? Has a friend ever been so bad with you? What did you do?" Not only this, but the student announces her intentions in the first sentence of her turn and skillfully pursues her goals till the very end.

Unlike what had occurred in her previous entries, S15 is now addressing the questions personally to the teacher as the use of the pronoun "you" proves: it is unmistakably from the teacher that she demands a response. Through the journal activity, S15 has, gradually, arrived at the point at which she can treat the relationship with the teacher as a well-defined interlocutor to whom questions can be addressed with undue fear of offense. This, in turn, has created new constraints for the teacher — new compared to the traditional classroom ones — leading the teacher into the roles of problem solver, advisor or friend. This interaction is interesting because it provides an illustration of the way students behaved strategically in their journals to achieve communicative goals that go beyond the boundaries of classroom life.

To sum up, it is possible to conclude that S15 is trying to negotiate dialogue journal genre into a place for discussing topics she finds relevant and meaningful, and is negotiating this development of the genre with the teacher. Thus, the student judges how far she is allowed to go and how far the teacher is willing to go with her. In postponing direct and overt involvement of the teacher till the very end, the student is taking great care not to prematurely expose either herself or the teacher to a form of discourse which might be rejected by her interlocutor. The student's action in the journal is two-fold. The student is working within the entry with the strategic use of questions, and over time, with a transition from indirect to direct questioning. This progression towards the use of direct questions concurrently derives its meaning and force from the gradual introduction of Personal Information Questions in the texts.[55] It will be argued below (cf. 4.2 below) that this behavior seems to be aiming at mutuality to be shared, thus extending the joint construction of meaning beyond the negotiation of new rules for the genre, and to the negotiation of roles.

Let us now turn to a more detailed examination of the questions which were isolated in the journals. As stated earlier in this section, all questions were analyzed on the basis of their form and not their function. Direct or indirect questions are referred to here as grammatical units in their own right. Also, questions were classified according to their type as displayed by the list contained in the taxonomy below. That is, if the apparent ground for asking a question was, for example, that of inquiring about the teacher's personal life, then the question was labeled Personal Information Question. This does not necessarily mean that students never invite the teacher in the journal just because Invitation Questions rate zero. Speakers may in fact resort to different morpho-syntactical forms for expressing the same functions, though the focus in this section will be circumscribed to formal questions only.

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[55] This study suggests that students feel they have to establish rapport with the teacher before asking personal questions. For personal information and possible implications in question asking, in general, cf. section 3.4.2 below.

To a closer examination, Table 3.5 below seems to indicate that students are not so much interested in the teacher as an institutional figure. Rather, questions show an orientation towards an understanding of the teacher as a person. Consider, for instance, the three top-ranking questions asked by the students. It is easy to see that these are not directly connected to the school context as such (cf. Subject-related Information and School-related Information Questions): Opinion Questions aim at investigating the teacher's views, usually with the aim of obtaining suggestions or opinions. Personal Information Questions look for knowledge of the teacher's personal life and generally tend to give rise to story development, whereas Challenges are an open dispute with the teacher mainly used by the students to assert their own position.

Student Questions	STotals Q-Type	SQ% QType	SQ% STotals	SQ% QTotals
Request for Opinion	36	95%	55%	32%
Personal Information	9	100%	14%	8%
Challenge	5	56%	2%	1%
Language-related Information	4	100%	8%	5%
Subject-related Information	3	33%	6%	4%
Request for Permission	3	100%	5%	3%
School-related Information	3	100%	5%	3%
Rhetorical Question	1	50%	5%	3%
Request for Information	1	50%	2%	1%
Topic Restatement	1	100%	2%	1%
Individual Totals	66	59%	100%	59%

Table 3.5: Type and Percentage of the Questions Formulated by the Students in their Journals.[56]

Table 3.6 below illustrates examples taken from each question type isolated in the students' journals. Some types of questions used by the teacher, such as, for example, Reflective Questions, Directive Questions, Suggestion Questions, were never used by the students in their entries (cf. Additional Tables in the Appendix).

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[56] SQ%/Q-Type relates to the percentage of each student question type over the total number of teacher and student questions for that type. SQ%/STotals relates to the percentage of that student question type over the total number of student questions for that type of question. SQ%/QTotals relates to the percentage of each student question type over the total number of teacher and student questions in the corpus.

Student Question Type	Examples from the Students' Journals
Request for Opinion	<p> Proff. What do you think? I hope <U> you <u> can understand me. <S09/14.3>
Personal Information	Did you live this situation when you were my age? Can you find an answer to this behaviour? I need advice! ? <S29/19.01>
Challenge	But why do we have to make a schoolwork about grammar? I don't like it also if I have to learn it. <S16/18.10>
Language-related Information	I would like* to teach like you when I'm adult *(CI VA IL FUTURO là?) <S09/24.01>
Subject-related Information	Can Humanism be considered the same as Renaissance? <S29/20.10>
Request for Permission	Can I'll write a post card you if I'm sad or ? don't know how to doy? <S09/24.01>
School-related Information	Have you put something about my exercise on you class (registro)...Only to know... <S09/14.02>
Rhetorical Question	Then, I hope to be allowed to spend also a couple of weeks with my boyfriend. Where? I sill don't know, it will be a surprise. <S11/16.05>
Request for Information	– how were parties? – how are Americans? <S09/16.05>
Topic Restatement	What about my horses? Well, the big one is doing all right [...] <S22/15.03>

Table 3.6: Student Question Types and Examples for each Type.

Analysis of questions also indicates that as the year progresses, students increasingly answer the teacher's questions. Although the dynamics of the interaction partly justifies questions remaining unanswered, it is nevertheless interesting to record this growing occurrence:

> [...] But how did you break your toe, it must be so painful to break a bone of the body. I have never experienced fractures in my life. <T01/19.01>

> Yes, you're right, it was painful for me when I broke my toe; I broke it at school, while I was playing football but now I'm quite well, I can walk well but I can't gym or dance even if I'd like to. [...] <S31/07.02>

In conclusion, when it comes down to question-asking, students seem to behave quite differently in their journals from student questioning patterns in the traditional classroom. Not only is the student-question ratio reversed quantitatively in the journal activity, but students also appear to use questions functionally in their turns. The relatively high number of questions that inquire about the teacher's personal perspective suggests the negotiatory work occurring across the entries as being directed towards the discovery of the teacher's human dimension. As genre is being modified and ratified by both participants, roles are ready to undergo change, too. The journal is thus redefined accordingly and the discourse adjusted to the participants' changing conversational needs. This is also confirmed by the increased matching between questions and answers as a sign of the interlocutors' willingness to build up new worlds to share together in the journal.

Complaining and Criticizing

According to Shuy (1988c:148), "the function of complaining [...] is a prime candidate for instruction." Yet, like many other language functions, complaining in school is "abolished altogether from speech and writing" (ibid.), especially in activities that are carried out in a foreign language, whereas "conversation not only contains, but requires" (ibid.) such functions. Like questions, complaining can be a face-threatening act. By overtly disagreeing with the teacher, students not only perform a pragmatically marked behavior[57] but also may disrupt the smooth unwinding of classroom life, undermining the teacher's authority in directing and controlling discourse. From a CA perspective, a complaint is also an important example of a first part of an adjacency pair, as it constrains the conversational partner into the role of complaint recipient, thus eliciting a reaction in the form of a second part to acknowledge, accept or reject the complainer's contention. In fact:

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[57] Conversational analysts have demonstrated the preference for agreement in conversation (Sacks 1987) and the tendency to pursue "preferred behavior" in interaction (Levinson 1983, Calò 1990). The data of this corpus do not show examples of harsh clash between the participants. However, in case of disagreement, I would dissent politely and support my ideas while pointing out to students that they did not necessarily have to approve of my

> Since the perlocutionary effect of complaining is to improve the plight of the complainer by causing the listener/reader to remove or diminish the prejudicial aspect of the event, [...] (Shuy 1988c:149)

both complainer and complaint recipient are required to engage in some negotiation to try to settle the event in the most gratifying and profitable way from an interactive/interactional standpoint.

Consequently, giving students the opportunity to complain is not just pedagogically constructive for the insights into process it provides the teacher, but also pragmatically significant for learners, who could thus be allowed to practice "a necessary life function" which "is not currently given much opportunity to develop" in the teaching situation (Shuy 1988c:148). For a complaint event to be a felicitous act, in fact, it must be carried out following a structure combining

> [...] a stated conflict (prejudice against the writer), new information (not obvious to the reader), and giving an account (evidence that the complaint event is true) [...] (Shuy 1988c:151, referring to Searle 1969)

The data analyzed in this study support the notion that most complaints cover teacher-student interpersonal relationships and academic concerns in general. Only occasionally would the

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positions and take my stand: "[...] I don't want you to agree with me, just think about it and consider things from different points of view. I'm glad you have understood the importance of the journal and I'm sure you will realize that it is not true that we are not satisfied with you! <T01-S12/24.01>." As to the students, they even avoid pointing to a contradicting opinion and just state or re-state what their feelings are about a certain point.

students complain about personal matters.[58] The students in the third-year class, especially, found teachers particularly demanding and academic work too rigorous. Thus, the journals would sometimes become a tool for conveying their discontent and for releasing tension and frustration. It should also be noted that a great number of complaints display inferred conflict, and that only a few of the complaints can instead be considered felicitous acts, containing a stated prejudice, an explanation and additional background information.

Now, it may be of some interest to point out that complaining marked a turning-point in the teacher-student exchange, leading to sudden enhanced interaction and rapport with the teacher. This suggests that the complaint events in the journals were strategically exploited by the students to turn their conflicts into a jointly accomplished enterprise to reach affective convergence. In fact, after a complaint, usually formulated at the beginning of the turn, the complaint recipient — the teacher — acknowledged the complaint and prepared the necessary conditions for agreement to be pursued in the following turn. By presenting plausible explanations and even by agreeing with the complainer, the teacher gives conversational equilibrium a chance of being re-gained in the interaction. The student, in turn, ratifies and usually accepts the explanations offered, responds to the situation, and discloses personal information to initiate a new topic. After the teacher's contribution to a complaint entry, in fact, a typical student development looks like the following:

> [...] But in this letter I wouldn't like to speak only about school, it's so borning do you agree I want to tell you something about my self. [...] <S12/14.02>

What becomes evident in the interaction, therefore, is that both teacher's and student's turns produce perlocutionary effects on their conversation not only to remediate[59] to the temporary disaffection occasioned in the journal but to induce a shift from positional to personal role relationships. Thus, because it is a marked behavior, "disagreement is handled by coming to an understanding" (Sacks 1987:67) in this interaction, too.[60] However, unlike what may happen in naturally occurring interactions, what is systematically the case here is that complaining necessarily leads to a conversion from positional incumbencies to personal roles.

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[58] This tendency in complaint areas confirms the results found by Shuy in his study (cf. 1988c:149).

The following examples aim to illustrate the three major behaviors which characterize the complaint structure in the journals. These are the diachronic change in the formulation of discontent, remedial work to mediate the cause-effect impact of complaining, and finally, rapport enhancement induced by complaint event management. Although it is not always possible to determine diachronic change (as there were not enough occasions for the students to generate repeated acts of complaining), felicitous complaints are accompanied by remedial work, and lead to a 3-turn exchange in which the third turn reinforces positive rapport.

S02's dialogue journal is illustrative of diachronic change in the formulation of student discontent. We are here confronted with a very subtle form of complaint:

> MY OPINION ABOUT MY TEXT <p> I think it is my worst text in my life. <p> I was very restless and so I couldn't concentrate. <p> Before the text I had been at home for a week. I have studied a lot but I think that I have done a lot mistakes. <p> I think that text was difficult

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[59] Repair or remedial work is referred to by Ellis (1994:584) as "attempts to identify and remedy communication problems, including those that derive from linguistic errors."

[60] Agreement surely bears strong implications in role relationships and rapport management in general, favoring the development of mutuality and trust between the interlocutors. This view finds support in the data. The search for agreement is an important behavior in the journals, characterizing the participants' entries throughout, and paves the way to gradual rapport enhancement in the long run. It may be also worthwhile to point out that the search for agreement leads to sustained conversation over turns as well.

> and so I begun to restless and I didn't remember what I have studied. <S02/13.12>

S02 is facing the problem of having to express her great disappointment for a test failure. At the same time, she appears to be wanting to blame her poor performance on the teacher's "difficult" test. To achieve her goal, the student, at first, takes upon herself responsibility for having "done a lot of mistakes" as she was not only "restless" but "couldn't concentrate" and "didn't remember what [she] ha[d] studied." However, later on in the entry, she seems to be getting to the point: "[the] text was difficult and so I begun to restless." Upon closer examination, this cause-effect statement becomes even more clear if related to the *incipit*: "it is my worst text in my life." In reality, the student is saying that she has failed the test on account of its difficulty. Although she has deployed her best efforts in preparation of the test — "Before the text I had been at home for a week [studying]" — the student has nonetheless produced a disastrous test. Thus, S02 skillfully succeeds in conveying a veiled and largely inferred complaint[61] in the journal by giving an ambiguous outline of her feelings. These, toward the end of the year, culminate in an overtly stated complaint:

> In this period I think a lot about our school system because I have found a lot of problems and diseases. <p> I was used to face my daily school life with serenity and gaiety but now I'm often worried and nervous. <p> This school is very different from the other that I have attended for the first two years of gymnasium. <p> We were a little family, the relationship between teachers and students was very good, we spoke about everythink without any problems and we knew that we could be helped both psychologically and in the school subjects. <p> I don't want to criticize this school but I think that in the class there is too much competition for the best notes, there isn't a strong friendship: everybody thinks only to himself and I note that there is no real co<A>m<a>munication <p> I suppose that we, young people, are not guilty for this but this type of institution that doesn't give you the

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[61] Through the use of the repeatedly hedged I think-sentences, the student is also trying to create a deferential tone which should further help obscure her real purpose.

> opportunity to help the others and aboveall to think about the others problems. <S02/14.03>

This second complaint marks a structural improvement compared to the previous one. The student seems to have developed modes of discourse which are more pragmatically appropriate. S02 believes that "our school system" and "this school," in particular, are hardly educational if they prompt only harsh competition saying, "there is too much competition for the best notes." In her opinion, this attitude inhibits the development of a sense of community in the classroom: "there isn't a strong friendship: everybody thinks only to himself and I note that there is no real communication." In such a context, the student feels insecure and exposed to a hostile environment: "now I'm often worried and nervous," which contrasts with past satisfaction with school. She states: "I was used to face my daily school life with serenity and gaiety." The student lists the positive aspects of the "other" school, meaning her previous school, which only emphasizes the prejudicial aspect of "this school," meaning her current school, which S02 does not "want to criticize."

S22's complaint structure is a good example, on the other hand, of the laborious remedial work which complaints require, especially when a harsh tone is adopted by the student. In this case, mitigation and possible obfuscation of the negative effect the complaint may have on the complaint recipient are considered necessary by the complainer:

> 2 hours of literature is too much for me. <p> So, 1 thing I've learnt today is the use of direct/indirect object. So, I've finally understood where I have to put the direct object if it's a noun or a pronoun and when to put the preposition before the indirect object. <p> I ~~find~~ found lliterature less stressing and difficult than grammatic, but the "today lesson" has been too long in my opinion. I hope that this has been the first and the last time we've ~~made~~ done 2 hours of literature. And I don't like the programn of next Monday, I don't want to do ~~make~~ a classwork!! <p> Do we really need to do it? <S22/18.10>

The student takes advantage of this turn to actually perform two complaints, neither of which — are felicitously conducted, though one is structurally more complete than the other. The first complaint concerns the literature class, which on that day was "too much" and "too long." It is interesting to note how S22 sidesteps the title "One thing I have learned today" to use her conversational turn for her own purposes. The most important action for this student, in fact, is that of stating her discontent abruptly: "2 hours of literature is too much." But because she realizes that the tone might be inappropriate, S22 engages in repeated remedial work to make her outburst more acceptable.

In the first place, the student partially mitigates the harshness of her complaint by circumscribing the lesson's exhausting effects, using the phrases "for me" and "in my opinion" to avoid dangerous generalizations. She also softens her criticism by including some good news — that learning has nevertheless occurred that day, though in another domain: "So, 1 thing I've learnt today is the use of direct/indirect object. So, I've finally understood where I have to put the direct object if it's a noun or a pronoun and when to put the preposition before the indirect object." If this helps the student to recover some face on the one hand, the complaint is, at the same time, kept alive, leaving it to us, in fact, to infer that probably she did not learn much literature because the lesson was too "stressing."

Then, S22 introduces a more positive evaluation about the lesson: "I found lliterature less stressing and difficult than grammatic." She also simultaneously reiterates her dissatisfaction: "but the 'today lesson' has been too long in my opinion." This time, the student specifies that the source of all disappointment resides in external factors to both subject and teacher: it is the length of the lesson which is the problem, and not, the subject or the way the teacher has presented the content. She adds a temporal remark — "today" — to further restrict the scope of her complaint. She then closes her invective hoping that "this has been the first and the last time we've done 2 hours of literature," probably wondering whether the teacher will feel offended by her remarks.

The second brief complaint is introduced by a coordination building up on the controversial tone which follows: "And I don't like the programn of next Monday" and includes a strong refusal of the teacher's plans for the following week ("I don't want to do a classwork!!"). Remedial work is here conducted in the form of a question: " Do we really need to do it?", which aims at giving the final word to the teacher to restore the teacher's threatened authority. The strategy adopted by this student in constructing her complaint events has been that of alternation. S22 moves from criticism to evaluation throughout the entry in the hope of neutralizing her statements. Also, as in the first complaint, S22 seems to show a preference in exposing herself through the first person pronoun "I," rather than referring openly to the teacher's role. The instances where the student resorts to the plural first person pronoun "we" are suspected of concealing imputation of direct responsibility to the teacher.

Because the complaints in the dialogue journals chiefly focus on some kind of conflict on school work and teacher attitude, the complaint events necessarily confine participants into institutional role conflicts. As previously mentioned, however, after agreement has been achieved by the participants, there is a shift toward more personal comments as demonstrated by the turns originated from the management of the following angry complaint:

> <BO> THE SCHOOL <bo> <p> I'm very fed up with the school. In this moment I have a lot to study I and I haven't one moment for my self. But what makes me angry is that our theachers aren't sadifate of our work <p> I give everything to school. <p> I have lost my spare time. <p> I can't stay with my friends more than 1 our a week but this is <A> int <a> important. <p> Fourtunatly there is the summer that can

> set you free from the stress of the rest of time. <A> But <a> I can't find right that nobody is happy of what our class do. It' very difficult going on thinking that the other aren't sadisfate enough and don't recognise your hard work. I know that studying is very important and I do it with plaasure but I hope that our theachers will ~~be more~~ understand our problems, ~~be more give mor~~ giving more attention to their behaviars <S12/24.01>

S12 develops a coherent and animated invective with a final moral for the teacher to consider. Her argument is so logical and held so tenaciously that she manages to convey her anger as well as her disappointment. From a structural point of view, the complaint is felicitously conducted. The student states an injustice: "our theachers aren't sadifate of our work." She then gives reasons to demonstrate that teachers should be "giving more attention to their behaviars," implying that teachers are against students, who work very hard. "In this moment I have a lot to study I and I haven't one moment for my self," she states. Additional information serves to clarify the student's attitude towards school: "I know that studying is very important and I do it with plaasure." This reveals aspects which could convince teachers to behave differently and also feel ashamed of their "behaviars."

In the teacher's response to this student, the immediate implications in role relationships between teacher and student are evident.[62] First of all, the teacher attempts to minimize the student's denunciation, remarking "Oh, oh! This sounds like a reproach!" Next, the teacher expresses appreciation for the student's sincere feelings: "I'm very happy you have made the point crystal-clear in your journal. I appreciate direct and sincere persons." Then, the teacher organizes her argument around two points: "you can't generalize too much [because] when we teachers complain and scold you students, we refer to a general trend" and "I have the impression the class has a hard time understanding that what you are doing is something which has to become part of yourselves, of your personalities, something which can make you better persons professionally and as human beings." Also, the teacher tries to make her explanations more explicit, ascribing the misunderstanding to a general student attitude: "The problem is that you students see us as 'the great enemy on earth.'" The teacher concludes by allowing S12 to evaluate freely the response: "I don't want you to agree with me, just think about it and consider things from different points of view." The teacher ends by complimenting the student one more time for having made a constructive use of the interaction: "I'm glad you have understood the importance of the journal and I'm sure you will realize that it is not true that we are not satisfied with you!" (cf. Appendix for <T01-S12/24.01>).

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[62] The contribution to rapport building inherent in teacher affiliation with students is explored in the teacher's section.

Now, the student's following turn is interesting for its socio-pragmatic implications:

> Dear Prof Morini <p> thank for your answer by that I have understood <A> a <a> lot of thinks. I recognise that the job of a teacher is very hard and difficult. When you find some students that aren't interested in what you are explaining. <p> I sincerly think you are a very intelligent teacher (i don't say this to increase my note) but some people in our school aren't (unfurtunatly) so qualificated. they have a bad relashionship with their student they prefer only teaching and seem strict people. this is the worst point in the way of teaching of a ~~people~~ person. I don't like the terrific atmosphere when there are some people. But it doesn't matter! Nothing can be perfect.! But in this letter I wouldn't like to speak only about school, it's so borning do you agree I want to tell you something about my self. I'm living ~~in~~ a terrible moment. I'm stressfull. and confuse. I'm sad <U> yes <u>! I don't like myself and I want to change! In fact I'm a cheerful person but when I find some diffucult everythink changend and become horrible. But this isn't important. What makes me extremely angry is San Valentino. Everybody gives you a present. it's the day of the love. annd I'm done. <U> Beatiful <u> I hope to find a boyfriend very soon But I think it's impossible. who wants me? It' doesn't matter I thnk you have understood I'm a little bit tragic person. I would like that you suggest me a place where I can study and improve my English. I don't know if

> I'm going abroad this sumer but before ~~I~~ spenting 3 mounth at the ~~side~~ sea sides I would like to study in a demanding way English. Thanks Francesca <S12/14.02>

Through her entry, S12 is not only offering to remedy to her previous complaint ("thank for your answer by that I have understood a lot of thinks"), but she is mainly undertaking to bridge a gap in teacher-student rapport, bringing in what linguists have referred to as the intimacy factor (cf. 4.1 below).

Other First Parts of Adjacency Pairs

This section is devoted to the illustration of other important first pair parts which characterized the dialogue journals. The most recurrent were: thank-you moves, apologies, offers, invitations, compliments and salutations. These features are intimately linked with considerations of politeness — a complex issue in its own right — which will not be explored here. A list of excerpts from the students' journal entries is, however, given below to exemplify the type of meaningful functional language and pragmatic complexity developed in the students' data, without attempting an analysis of their implications with politeness. For a discussion of politeness considerations cf. Brown & Levinson 1978, Carrel & Konneker 1981, Cohen & Olshtain 1981, Goody 1978a.

Thank-you moves:

> Well, thank you for the sympathy. My friends agree with me by saying that boys are too often insensible beings, but it's difficult to speak of such things with grown-up. They think these are not concrete problems but for us they are. I mean, I know there are people with much bigger problems but, since we have none, these can become "existential difficulties". There's a sentence you wrote I will always remember. Don't let them step over your feelings and your rights". I completely agree with it. [...] Now I would know what to write in a paragraph about the differences between a woman and a man! <S29/07.02>

> [...] <p> P.S: thanks so much for your disponibility and for having had this wonderful idea of the open journal. <S14/16.02>

Apologies:

> <i> Hi! I'm sorry for this red-pen, but I haven't any other, so I can only use this! I am sorry I missed the play last night, but I had forgotten that I had to meet some friends to have dinner toghether in my house!! For what concerns the English movies, I'm sorry too, but my mother is busy on Thursday and I usually have lots of <WU> Histrory <wu> and <WU> Philosophie <wu> to learn! [...] <S22/15.03>

> Please help me! Sorry for the paper but I'm at school and I haven't a bigger one! <p> Bye --- <S16/14.03>

Offers:

> [...] What I realised reading this book is very fascinating. I think you should read this book and if you want I can lend you it. <S19/15.03>

Invitations:

> [...] For this reason, I'm sure that you will like ~~her~~ Mathab a lot and I invite (!?!) you to see her, whenever you have time! <S22/23.01>

> [...] Next year ~~wil~~ we will give you and your husband a part in our next video-tape, so will have fun with us for Carnival!! <S22/15.03>

Compliments:

> [...] <p> I sincerly think you are a very intelligent teacher (i don't say this to increase my note) but some people in our school aren't (unfurtunatly) so qualificated. <S12/14.02>

> [...] <p> I'm happy of you teaching. I think you're a very good teacher and you have also a good pronuncia. (pronunciation) I would like* to teach like you when I'm adult [...]<S09/24.01>

> [...] In Norway we don't do much literature in English; [...] I like the English classes here more than the Norwegian ones though; they're definitely more interesting. <S17/18.10>

Salutations:

> Good morning, Mrs Morini. I'm at home now, and I'm sitting on the couch. I didn't know what to make and so I thought to you. [...] <S20/22.01>

> [...] SEE you ~~LATER~~ ON WEDNESDAY! <p> Laura <p> OPS! THEREISNT a letter... <S09/24.01>

> Dear Prof Morini. <p> How are you <p> I'm fine thanks. but today I'm little bit melanconic. [...] <p> Bye Bye <p> by <p> Francesca. <S12/14.03>

3.2.2 Topic Continuation: a Structural Feature of Journal Writing

As indicated by Peyton (1988c:187): "Genuine interaction requires that both people participate in contributing to and advancing the same topic." For the purposes of interactive journals, topic continuation refers to the students' choice of acknowledging and possibly continuing one or more topics discussed in the teacher's previous entry. The topics may have been a teacher's initiation or a teacher's reaction to an earlier student's initiation and therefore topics re-cycled by the students. Staton (1988a:27) considers topic continuation "a basic structural feature of the dialogue journal." In fact, the students deciding on a topic indicated a change in the way the students related to the interaction. Building on a shared topic for discussion indicated the students' interest and willingness to participate in the joint construction of discourse and express their respect for the teacher's comments. Above all, topical orientation signaled a growing level of trust in considering the teacher as their exclusive interlocutor in the journal.

Students contributed to continuing topics in different ways. The usual way to continue topics was by alluding back to information contained in the previous turns. An example of this comes from S19. The student has been assigned to group B on account of her low degree of interactivity. However, topic continuation allows her to develop the interactive process and achieve more complex discourse in her entries. She initiates a six-turn exchange to discuss reading as a favorite activity and uses topical orientation to establish a topic of mutual interest before initiating the real discussion:

> What I'm going to speak about it is concerned with my hobbies. As young people do, I always listen to pop music or rock music and so on, I don't know why but I especially like English or American music and not so much Italian music. My greatest passion is, however, playing tennis, I love very much this sport and I'm sorry because for 3 years I

> haven't been able to play it <A> frequentely <a> because of the school. Another passion of mine is reading. <S19/24.01>

In the above entry, S19 gives a general survey of her favorite pastimes. She goes into some detail about music and tennis but only marginally does she refer to reading. The teacher's reply acknowledges hobbies and recreational activities, in general, as being necessary activities to reach physical and mental balance and also suggests the student find time to resume playing tennis to release tension. As to music, the teacher discusses the type of music she prefers, but refers more to reading as a professionally and personally important activity. In the following turn, S19 restricts the focus of the discussion to reading and seeks agreement by stating the same reasons the teacher cited for why reading is a favorite mental exercise.

> OPEN JOURNAL <p> Last time I wrote my open journal I couldn't speak more about my passion of reading; now I'd like to deal more with it because reading is a very important activity of mine, not only in order to improve my ability in writing, but also to create my own personality. Through books I can and could find answeres to my doubts and questions. <S19/09.02>

By orienting the discussion to reading, S19 tried to open up lines of communication with the teacher, establishing a mutually interesting topic in the journal. Of the three hobbies she listed, in fact, reading was the only one of mutual interest.

The teacher's response goes deeper into the issue, emphasizing the interest both teacher and student share. In her response, the student re-cycles reading as a topic, focusing the attention on a single book:

> According to my last open journal I'd like to speak about a book I read last summer. The title of the book is: <U> Pomodori verdi fritti alla fermata di Whistle Stop <u>, by Susan Flagg, I think. I watched also the film and I liked it very much, but the book is more beautiful than the film, it is extremely fascinating. The writer tell the <A> us <a> condition of black people in the first years of the 1900, this description made me able to reflect about people that have another culture and anather position in society. What I realised reading this book is very

> fascinating. I think you should read this book and if you want I can lend you it. <S19/15.03>

S19 is invoking topical orientation across turns to specifically search for common ground. The teacher's response continues the discussion of the book and film in question and after giving her version of the themes dealt with in the film, the exchange comes to its conclusion.

The above exchange clearly demonstrates topic continuation. Topic continuation implied a progression towards the development of functional uses of the language through which the participants managed to reach affective convergence (cf. 4.1 below). To continue a topic does not necessarily lead to conversation unless the two have some kind of communicative purpose in mind and they successfully attain it. The student's last entry reads: "I think you should read this book and if you want I can lend you it." It is worth noting that S19 uses the pronoun "you" to address the teacher directly for the first time. Not only this but the neutral reporting tone of her previous exchanges gives way to a straightforward suggestion and offer, indicating that the conversational features which emerged during the interaction reflected the student's efforts in pursuing topical orientation with the teacher.

This example is not an isolated case. Students also use questions to continue topics. More specifically, Topic Restatement Questions seem to serve this purpose, which the following examples illustrate:

> [...] The answer to my "secret": 1 obviously, the person who gave me the flowers was my boyfriend. 2 the reason? 2 years and a half we are together. I didn't write you about that because I ~~didn't~~ thought you weren't interested in, but now that I know you are, I want to tell you more about that. [...] <S21/07.02>

> [...] <p> What about my horses? Well, the big one is doing all right, I mean she feels well, she's just a little bit fat, but this isn't a problem. Instead, the baby-horse is very ill! I have to spend lots of time with her, in order to help her, because she cannot breathe well and her hurt is

> working too fast! But I hope for the best, I am usually optimistic. [...] <S22/15.03>

Topic continuation, including variations on the theme, is a key feature in molding discourse to construct coherence. As Levinson (1983:315) states:

> The point is simply that topical coherence cannot be thought of as residing in some independently calculable procedure for ascertaining (for example) shared reference across utterances. Rather, topical coherence is something *constructed* across turns by the collaboration of participants.

To consider it a mere linking discourse device, therefore, is to neglect its strategic power to get in touch and stay in touch with one's interlocutor. Once the participants have defined a mutually interesting topic, they feel confident about guiding the interaction in the suggested direction: they bring up additional details of a story or integrate the given information. In short, topical orientation results into the creation of a shared conversational context where the students' and teacher's choices and behaviors are mutually endorsed for the free expression of feelings and opinions, especially of a personal nature (cf. 3.4.2 below). To incorporate somebody else's conversational wants and needs — that is, choosing to discuss our interlocutors' topics — most often means to have some kind of communicative purpose in mind. This purpose involved, in the journals, interactional conversational outcomes.

3.2.3 Negotiatory Work for Topic Initiation

Topics were usually introduced and initiated in the journals without much negotiatory work on the students' part. However, this was hardly needed. When prompted to write about something they had learned that day or something they had found depressing in their life, the learners would start discussion of their topics as if they had been asked to fill out a form. In fact, the subject provided excused them from having to choose a topic, and instead allowed the students to see their writing as a duty. As the year progressed, some of the students started to negotiate before developing their topics. The data suggest this attitude turned out to be enhanced when the topic was entirely entrusted to the students alone.

Starting from January, the students were free to choose their own topics, with the expectation that the students would treat topics more informally. Surprisingly, many of the students reacted by prefacing their texts with a title as in the following examples:

> My free time and I. [...] <S10/14.03>
>
> <WU> My dream <wu> [...] <S11/14.02>
>
> "LITTLE BUDDHA" [...] <S25/22.01>

In most cases, the entry consisted of a presentation, development, and a conclusion. It was evident that this choice obligated the students to stick to a formula throughout the turn. The following example illustrates this:

> <WU> My dream <wu> <p> The dream of my life is of course a bit special but if I ~~reali~~ can realise this dream, I will be the happiest person of the world. My dream is travelling "in 80 days" around the world. <p> When I was a child I already dremt to travel a lot and I felt very happy when I went with my parents on vacation. <p> Until now I have travelled a lot but it isn't still enough. I would like to see all countrys of the world. When I will have finished school, I will look for a work in a travel agency, so I will be able to travel as much as I like. <S11/14.02>

This sort of paragraph development made it difficult for the students to view writing as a tool for a real communicative activity, and therefore topic continuation across turns seemed almost impossible. Even worse, in turns titled such as "My childhood," "Organizing a party," the teacher's relevant and collaborative responses were of no use in achieving interactivity. The same students would generally repeat the same pattern in every subsequent entry, starting a new subject so as to preclude an interactive flow of information. In fact, conversations did not develop out of regularly title-prefaced entries except for one isolated example (cf. S12's interaction in the Appendix).

While it is not universal that those who decided to go for the title-introduction-development-conclusion format can never build up conversations in interactive writing, the data demonstrate that titles usually play the role of containers — once they had been filled, the entries were simply stored away and their topics never returned to for the rest of the interaction. Though the initiation was automatically the students', the title-development pattern the teacher had suggested at the beginning of the year had become their model. This model had evoked and prompted a familiar classroom activity similar to paragraph writing.

On the other hand, other students introduced topics by means of the most general title available to them: (A) Journal. This choice offered more freedom to develop their topics compared to the definite title choice, for what was to follow much depended on the students' interpretation of what a journal was for and what it could be used for. This presentation usually started some kind of conversational activity with emergence of interactive features in the turn or turns to come (cf. 3.1 above):

> Journal <p> <i> I would like to speak about my favourite friend Elena, whom I've known sience kindergarden. When we were small children we always played toghether, because we lived very close and still now we go out together. [...] <S07/24.01>

In the above entry, S07 negotiates the introduction of the topic of her friend Elena by starting, "I would like to speak about my favourite friend Elena." The student then goes on to describe her friend's temperament and interests and continues the topic after the teacher's contribution:

> I agree with the answer you give me, because thanks Elena I learnt and I'm learning my difetti, my mistakes, she helps me to become more sure, less shy and whenever I'm sad I always think "Fortunately I have my friend Elena and not ~~why~~ because I'm sure she can solve my

> problems because it would be untrue, but she suggests me how to copy with them: [...] <S07/14.02>

This exchange proves that S07's interpretation of the journal was oriented towards a less conventional form of written communication. It also indicates the students did not seem to need an introductory note to their writing in the case of ongoing discussions. In such instances, they would forget about titles to hasten their engagement in the conversation. Take the following example:

> As I have already told you,[63] my little horse was born six days ago. So, as I have noticed that you love animals, I would like to tell you something more about this little girl, whose name is Mahtab (in Italian this means: ~~raggio~~ "Chiaro di luna") [...] <S22/23.01>

It may be interesting to note that in this turn S22 not only continues the preceding discussion, but she simultaneously carries out some negotiation to justify her conversational choices, too. Her statement: "as I have noticed that you love animals, I would like to tell you something more about this little girl" confirms her cooperation and firm engagement in the interaction. In order to foster a meaningful and acceptable exchange, the student seeks to harmonize her choices with the teacher's previous writings. Titles re-appear, though as a generic "Journal," when a shift of topic is made necessary in the already well-established discussion:

> <U> JOURNAL <u> <p> Thanks a lot for your answear! But we can't always speak about animals, so I would like to change the theme of our journal. Do you agree? I mean, we can speak, better write, about many other things, also if today I've no idea of what I can tell you! This is ~~a~~ really a funny week at school, my schoolfriends and <WU> I <wu> <A> me?!? <a> are very ~~exciting~~ excited, in fact we have to prepare a show for S. Valentino and performe it in front of the other classes. So we are very busy in organizing our performance. I would like to give you a "scoop" and tell you our idea, but I can't, I've promised don't

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[63] S22 is here referring to a spoken exchange we had had some time before about the birth of her horse, and promoted in turn by our discussion contained in our journal entries dated Nov. 11, 1993.

> tell ~~it~~ anybody! Are you going to do something special for carnevale?[64] <S22/08.02>

Starting with thanks for the teacher's previous contribution, S22 begins a rather elaborate negotiation of change of topic — the topic which enabled student and teacher to extend their conversation over several turns for the first time. The thank-you move is perhaps meant to offset the topic shift the student pursues soon afterwards in the entry. S22 starts feeling responsible for the teacher's engagement in the interaction, and when she makes her intentions explicit about changing "the theme of our journal," she feels she owes her interlocutor some explanation. The student's decision to interrupt the ongoing discussion may be judged uncooperative by the teacher. Thus, S22 hurries to allude to topics student and teacher can share together to avoid misunderstanding: "we can speak, better write, about many other things."

Another example of topic shift accompanied with ingenious negotiation to justify topic introduction is given below for analysis:

> Dear Prof Morini <p> thank for your answer by that I have understood <A> a <a> lot of thinks. [...] But in this letter I wouldn't like to speak only about school, it's so borning do you agree I want to tell you something about my self. [...] <S12/14.02>

Once again the turn contains the student's appreciation for the teacher's collaborative response. S12 comments back on the preceding exchange, working up toward a satisfactory settlement of a misunderstanding (cf. S12's bold complaint in 3.2.1 above), and negotiates her imminent topic shift: "But in this letter I wouldn't like to speak only about school, it's so borning do you agree." In claiming validity for the topic to be introduced, S12 tries to minimize the loss of face which could derive from the interruption of an ongoing exchange. Unlike S22's Request for Permission above, S12's question can here be read as a Request for Opinion aiming at negotiating the validity of her personal topic together with the teacher.

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[64] Questions are also used to introduce topics in the journals. For example: [...] <p> Anyway...What I'm going to ask you it doesn't deal with the title, but please if you want, aswer me ~~?~~ <p> do you think that two persons (like me and Giulio) could have the possibility to get married (in a future of couse) also ~~if one of~~ if one <A> of them <a> has studied and ~~one~~ <A> the other <a> hasn't? [...] <S09/16.05>. A note of interest is also the negotiatory work conducted in preparation of the question asking.

The topic-shift moves discussed so far are all evoked by the students to start topics of a personal nature. The journals appear, in general, to be dominated by a sort of emancipation from classroom discourse not only on the formal plane — title-introduction-development-conclusion format — but, more importantly, on the topical level documenting a shift toward more personalized issues.[65]

3.3 The Teacher's Journal Entries

The previous sections trace the development of various discourse features in the students' journal entries. Their increasing engagement did not, however, evolve in a vacuum, but rather as part of a joint effort carried on with the teacher. This section analyzes some features of the teacher's entries, and traces changes over time. The attitudes described here have little value as isolated instances and do not account for the discourse complexity developed in the journals unless considered as being interrelated with the sociolinguistic behaviors documented in 3.2 above.

The first striking characteristic of the earliest teacher's entries is their conservative and traditional format. By giving a title to the students, the teacher was leading the process in her undiscussed role of teacher-initiator (cf. 1.3 above). The students interpreted the titles as authentic controlling moves (cf. 2.3

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[65] This is not to say that a classroom assignment can never be about a student's personal life or problems. I am just claiming that the implications from the interactive/interactional standpoint are totally different in interactive writing.

above) and their responses were intended to generate feedback in the form of evaluation or correction. Indeed, the teacher's early entries contained many explanations, recommendations and advice. The following examples illustrate this:

> It very often happens to go back home, open up books, study notes and find out that there is something you thought you had understood but you did not. From what I understand but I may be wrong you don't elaborate what I say in class and tend to write down the exact words I speak. Try to understand concepts and ideas and write down your own key-words corresponding to your interpretation of facts and then we can talk about it. <T01-S22/20.10>

or:

> [...] You will feel more comfortable with tenses, adjectives and structures with practice and practice means reading and writing a lot. In particular, keep up with what we are doing in class, review the same things and re-read the same things. <T01-S18/20.10>

or:

> The acquisition of a foreign language is a complex process but it is not impossible and I'm sure you will succeed because you like the language. [...] Keep practising the language at home it's good exercise! The more you ~~make~~ speak aloud the more you'll be able to speak more fluently. <T01-S14/13.10>

The students regularly brought up learning English in their entries as a major focus for discussion. To not acknowledge this in the teacher's responses would have been uncooperative. The teacher's responses with respect to learning took the form of directives. Imperatives were the teacher's generalized manner of relating to the students: "Try to understand concepts and ideas and write down your own key-words," "keep up with what we are doing in class, review the same things and re-read the same things," "Keep practising the language at home it's good exercise!". A strict tone also creeped in: "you don't elaborate what I say in class and tend to write down the exact words I speak," or "You will feel more comfortable with tenses, adjectives and structures with practice and practice means reading and writing a lot," and "The acquisition of a foreign language is a complex process but it is not impossible."

The teacher also used repetition and paraphrasing. In reformulating the students' ideas, the teacher wanted, on the one hand, to re-cycle corrections of mistakes or fill the students' linguistic gaps,[66] and on the other, to keep a very safe distance from a personal standpoint. Consider the following entry:

> Yes, the only classes you had today were my English classes because you visited the exhibition organized in our city in honour of Mirò. I'm glad you are enjoying our reading of articles. It is important to analyse how newspaper articles are structured and how paragraphs are written and I'm sure you'll improve a lot and learn more rules. You might not find all the articles interesting for you but I'll try to do my best to find subjects of interest for you teen-agers. <T01-S05/13.10>

Of course, the teacher's role did not impose limitations on what to say or how to say things; all the same, it had the effect of restricting freedom. When the teacher focused on corrections, she fell into the artificial discourse she had wanted to avoid (cf. 2.3 above). The disappointing result was that of fabrication more than communication.

This development was due to the institutional student-teacher relationship. In making corrections, the teacher was approaching the journals from her role as "teacher," which only encouraged the traditional form of student-teacher interaction both students and teacher had taken for granted but which was leading towards the inhibition of the communicative process, and even to generated silence (cf. below in this section). The following entry demonstrates this:

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[66] Code-mixing or borrowing is the temporary insertion an interlanguage speaker makes of an L1 word (or any other language) into an ongoing conversation conducted in L2. Items which are borrowed are not incorporated into the IL system. In the dialogue journal interactions of this study, code-switching covers all those examples of borrowings from Italian. Students regularly draw from their own mother tongue for help, though in different ways, in order to supplement deficiencies in their L2 structure. Few recur to L3 words as figures indicate that, out of 32 journals, only two students introduce 1 German word each (though 1 repeated twice), and another provides 1 word in French. In relative terms, it can be maintained that the number of code-switching is low in relation to the overall words employed by the students in their texts. For a definition and discussion of communication strategies cf. Tarone (1980), Faerch & Kasper (1983), Faerch & Kasper (1984), Faerch, Haastrup, & Phillipson (1984).

> [...] You might not be interested in politicians and famous people's lives or the life of Mrs McCartney but who cares?! Just learn the words and the structures so as to become good at speaking and reading! <T01-S12/13.10>

It is hard to deny that these few lines do not contain any message. Yet, if we consider that the teacher was trying to correct the student's "Lunda McCurtney's live," "the work of a german politic," and the concluding "I'm not very good at parlare e leggere English," the student-teacher roles were taking over the formulation of authentic messages. At this point, the teacher started to avoid the institutional stance of corrector and focused more on conveying genuine reactions at the students's writing.

The journal also gave the teacher the opportunity to admonish a few students for their negative attitudes towards school and learning. If using the journal to confront the students on such delicate matters was, let us say, more polite and undoubtedly more tactful (for the teacher was keeping the question private instead of emphasizing her disapprobation publicly in front of the whole class), this had, on the other hand, disastrous repercussions on the outcome of the exchange. The interactions never developed authentically and most of these students dropped journal writing before the end of the year:[67]

> Cecilia, I don't really know what to say. You've been telling me that you want to improve and learn English since the beginning of the year, I mean school year, but you have done very little in reality. I already told you in my last journal that you must study more and get somebody to help you with your homework. Also, take part in our classes, don't talk as you usually do. I have the impression that you have been quieter lately, which is good. I hope I'm not wrong. <T01-S03/24.01>

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[67] It is, of course, hard to determine the extent to which my admonishing behavior has impeded communication with these students or whether their overall attitude towards school, in general, was enough for them to limit their involvement in the activity.

The above reaction is an attempt to draw in someone who is hopelessly uncooperative. Besides conveying strong criticism, the turn exacerbates the tension between the two parties, aggravating the lack of trust deriving from repeatedly frustrated promises. The teacher takes up an ironical and challenging tone in the following turn, which reprimands the student for his unsuccessful test.

> I would bet anything! It is true you could have studied more. But I think you are mature enough (at least, you should be) to know what you want and what you don't want. I say you should study more and be quiet and more collaborative in class. But you decide for yourself! And learn the proverb "to escape by the skin of one's teeth" because that's what has happened to you! <T01-S04/13.12>

An inquisitorial and challenging tone also marks the contribution to S13 below. This student kept forgetting to turn in assignments. On one occasion, he said he had forgotten his journal entry at home. The teacher responded in the following way:

> First of all, where is the previous piece of writing? Well, I'm glad you don't lack self-confidence. and that you have checked your skills and abilities. <p> Not everybody feels he/she is good at something. [...] <T01-S13/20.10>

The examples above, show how the teacher's responses were impersonal and detached and could be addressed to any student. It took some time and effort to redefine the role relationship which dominated the interactions and get rid of the constraints which were impeding the participants to behave authentically in the building up of conversation.[68] What started to change during the school year was the type collaboration the teacher began to develop with her students. Her contributions stopped being mechanical, repetitious or sententious to become more individually oriented.

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[68] Looking back, it now appears to me that it all started when I began to feel uneasiness and difficulty in responding, when, at a given date — different for each student's journal — I realized that as I was writing back, I was sort of forced to carefully sift my text and weigh the consequences my words could entail.

3.3.1 Affiliation and Appreciation

The dialogue journals have documented the teacher's growing effort in expressing support and esteem to her students. Over time, the teacher showed increasing tolerance and appreciation, which became the teacher's philosophy in dealing with the class. Because the role of teacher is one of those roles in our society which are entitled to admonish and chastise their conversational partners (cf. Goody 1978b:15 in 3.2 above), attempts will be made here to explore the discourse processes which made it possible for the teacher to have so often ignored her institutional prerogatives in the course of the interaction and adopt a different tone instead.

A huge quantity of the journal entries focused on the students' problems, anguish and frustration. Such information seems to have been conceived by the students with a view of acquainting the teacher with a state of affairs existing in their lives at the moment of writing, possibly to elicit the teacher's opinion and help. The teacher became involved in their troubles and made efforts to comfort the students. In short, the students' journal entries often took the form of Troubles-Telling, and the teacher tried to show concern for their problems.

Conversational analysts Jefferson & Lee (1981:416) distinguish between the Troubles-Telling, with a focus on the "troubled person," and the Service Encounter, with a focus on the "problem and its properties." That is, as long as a Troubles-Telling instance is interpreted and treated as such by the recipient, the Troubles-Teller preserves "the status of the talk *as* a Troubles-Telling, with its particular structural and interactional properties" (ibid.), and follows the rules for Troubles-Tellers. Thus, we infer that if we contribute to a Troubles-Telling and comply with its relevant categories, we, at the same time, contribute to humanizing the talk and to maintaining the focus on the person and his/her experiences, rather than reduce it to a mere "instrumental exchange" about the problem.

Needless to say, treating a problem as a Troubles-Telling rather than a Service Encounter involves, in the classroom, different communicative risks for both teacher and students,[69] as can be seen in the following set of exchanges — a good example of how the teacher managed what appeared to be a desperate cry:[70]

> One thing I have learnd today <p> Today my english teacher gave me my hopmework It was a desaster! <p> I'm spending //attraversando// an unhappy moment because I've changed my school and However my teachers and my school friends are very pleasand I feel (my self?) very (insicura e insoddisfatta but I think that every day, going to school, I find a little of coraggio to go avanti, because I want to become good to school. <p> I'm afraid //paura// of english classwork. I know that if it <A> will <a> go bad I'll forget fiducia in my self but I know also that I must superare all this disagio to became an andult. I think I understand the english lesson but when I <A> 'll <a> do then exercises I think it could be catratrofic we'll see!! <S09/13.10>

The response to this student contained a lot of support. S09, in fact, constructed her turn around the psychological aspect of her relationship with school. According to her analysis, the insecurity and dissatisfaction induced by the assignment failure: "Today my english teacher gave me my hopmework It was a desaster!" presage more disastrous effects on the psychological plane: "I'm afraid paura of english classwork. I know that if it will go bad I'll forget fiducia in my self." Thus, unless some kind of action is undertaken, the student may collapse in despair, while prevailing over her painful situation is becoming a challenging test for her future: "I must superare all this disagio to became an andult." The whole turn is an overt request for support addressed to someone who has had to cope with similar situations in the past.

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[69] I was sometimes preoccupied not to conform my behavior to the prescribed school norm: the more we were progressing in our exchanges the more the language we were producing in the journals sounded considerably distant from traditional classroom discourse and I began to fear the consequences of seeing my authority reduced as a result of this. At the same time, I did want to break the lockstep and have to admit that when I was feeling afraid of losing control of the classes, I turned, for encouragement, to those students who had decided to risk with me from the start. There, I would find the answers to my doubts.

[70] It is interesting to note that although S09 prefaced her turn with a title, she never develops it throughout the entry.

The teacher's efforts in the subsequent turn tried to re-assure the student. Through her response, the teacher accepts the role of the "Troubles Recipient," encouraging the student to overcome her anguish:

> Cheer up Laura! <p> Nothing is impossible. I can understand that you are going through a very bad period because of the change. But don't lose confidence in yourself! It will be hard to catch up with your classmates in the beginning but you'll improve if you want to. When you feel something is not clear just ask. Teachers are usually happy to help students who <U> really <u> want to learn. And don't get depressed in case your grammar test will not be as good as you hope it to be. Don't feel insecure and dissatisfied <U> just <u> because <U> one <u> test has not turned out as good as you wanted it to be. there's nothing catastrophic about a bad test or exercise and remember English is a beautiful language. <T01-S09/13.10>

It should be noted, however, that although the topic is not language learning, the affiliation is framed in traditionally asymmetrical teacher-student relations: the teacher imparts directives in the form of imperatives which sound more like advice (cf. also 3.3.2 below on suggesting a course of action): "Don't lose confidence in yourself," "Don't get depressed," and "Don't feel insecure and dissatisfied." However much the teacher may have felt she was acting as a Troubles-Recipient, what she says is interpreted by the student as an attempt to shift the focus from herself as a person to the problem:

> [I]t is from appropriate Troubles-Recipients, in the environment of a Troubles-Telling, that a Troubles-Teller properly receives and accepts emotional reciprocity, and from appropriate Advice-Givers, in the environment of a Service Encounter, that an Advice-Seeker properly receives and accepts advice. Cross-environment profferings of reciprocity or advice turn out to be problematic. (Jefferson & Lee 1981:421)

It is therefore not surprising that S09 fails to ratify the teacher's advice openly in the following turn, focusing instead on the encouragement. Her efforts are instead deployed to correct what she considers to be misunderstanding of the pant of her entry. Though she does allude to the teacher as being understanding and supportive, she only does so indirectly and in a most general way:

> [...] <p> I'm a sensible <B> insecure <b> girl and I'm happy if there is ~~one~~ a person who tell me that all will go ok! <S09/20.10>

The student's reaction to the feelings of sympathy she nonetheless seems to perceive in the teacher's response serves as a pretext to revive the teacher's interest in her "sensible," "insecure" nature and drag the attention away from the problem she has taken great care of elucidating in her previous contribution. Revealing and pointing to her vulnerability enables S09 to confine the whole question to the personal domain of her self, thanks to which she can corroborate her need for more support and affiliation. The student might, in this way, have communicated to the teacher her desire to remain a Troubles-Teller and therefore expressed her wish to relate to the student-teacher relationship as a person and not as a student.

And a few weeks later, in fact, the student's journal resumes the lamenting tone about the same frustration and anguish, once more confirming that she has not yet acquired the means to struggle alone, thus justifying the formulation of an extra Troubles-Telling instance:

> Mss Morini. How are you? <p> I'm under stress because of the schol. I HATE OUR SCHOOL. it thinks only to give us a good preparation. Noone thinks at our years. When I'm graduated or when I'm attending university and I have an excellent preparation, who will be able to give me back my 16/17 years... also a minute is important in the life of a person. <p> OUR SCHOOL IS WRONG. Some of my classfriends think that, tout I hate when we are talking about our scholl problems and the bests (...) say nothink. they look the sky and don't understand our problems <p> But the worst is that they say nothink. <p> Also

> Manzoni didn't like persons like these (Don Abbondio, do you remember "Promessi Sposi" I think it's one of the best novel I've read) Anyway...What can we do? <p> I don't know what, now, but ~~somethink~~ I think we'll do something [...] <S09/14.03>

Here again, the teacher seems to be called upon to play an important role in the student's unresolved issue. S09's dismissal of her classmates as possible reliable and comprehensive listeners justifies her recourse to the teacher: "Some of my classfriends think that, tout I hate when we are talking about our scholl problems and the bests (...) say nothink. they look the sky and don't understand our problems <p> But the worst is that they say nothink."

Very often the teacher's affiliation overlaps with appreciation. As is evidenced by the contribution reported below, the teacher's attempts at rationalizing the student's fears and uncertainties are not the only interactional concern in dealing with S07:

> Well, first of all, Elisa, let me tell you that you can't think of yourself as such a negative person. Everybody has faults. We are not perfect. Thanks God! Too much perfection would make the world so boring! But of course, one should make efforts to improve oneself, but also to accept one's limitations. [...] Why do you feel so insecure? You should not!!! You are intelligent and nice-looking, polite and respectful, people can't but be happy to interact with you and must certainly seek your company and friendship. Don't pay attention to that stupid jerk, to what he told you about your teeth and your thinness. I don't personally think you are too thin and even if you were, there are so many girls in the world who would wish to be as skinny as you are! And your teeth are not too big; at least, I have never noticed they are. Think of the good qualities you have! Think of the so many people around you who like and appreciate you just the way you are, I mean with all the imperfections YOU are saying you have. [...] <T01-S07/14.02>

Apart from a general statement: "Everybody has faults. We are not perfect," probably uttered to affiliate S07 to a sort of fellowship, the teacher immediately sets to work to turn the student's convictions upside down: "You are intelligent and nice-looking, polite and respectful," and "I don't personally think you are too thin and even if you were, there are so many girls in the world who would wish to be as skinny as you are! And your teeth are not too big; at least, I have never noticed they are." Appreciation seems to be invoked here as a way of gaining the student's trustworthiness in order to become entitled to affiliate and help the student overcome her fears.

Yet, S07's next turn did not in the least acknowledge the teacher's remarks: she takes up a new topic. So, it is hard to say what the student's reaction to the sympathy expressed in the entry was and if there was any at all. However, the topic shift is likely to have been an indication of the student's perplexity about losing her Troubles-Teller status. What further adds to this interpretation is that the same student re-cycles her lack in self-confidence shortly afterwards:

> JOURNAL: <p> This year I have been and lived positive and negative moments. <p> The most positive is to have known a new good friend at school and outside. She has a mervellous caracter. She is always ready to help me, and I think she can help me to mature and change my self because she understand me, my personality. and defects <p> A negative aspect of this year was the <U> study <u>! <p> I have been some difficulties because I haven't still learnt to organise myself and to <WU> match <wu> school and sport. <p> So I have been some delusions, but the next year I want to chanche my study plains, to live the school more relax without <WU> afraid <wu> of not ~~to~~ being ready or wrong. <S07/16.05>

Like in the past, the student relies heavily on a "good friend" to resolve her problems (cf. <S07/24.01> in the Appendix), demonstrating that little had changed meanwhile in the way she was still facing the world. It follows that the teacher's entry is, this time, perfectly conceived as a Troubles-Recipient contribution, going even as far as promising this student affiliation and support for the school year to come:

> Elisa, if I can, I would like to be of help. It is terrible to feel insecure all the time, to feel judged and examined thoroughly on any occasion. I hope I will be your teacher next year, so that we can continue our discussions and maybe I can teach you something more besides

> English. I don't understand why you are saying you have been dissappointed this year. Unless something happened to you during a tennis match I don't believe you have a right to complain about your grades! Anyway, just remember that it is not always possible to be the best, and what is even more depressing, it is sometimes difficult to show what one really is. And as a result, we feel frustrated because we are afraid of people's opinions. Who cares!? Just relax, have a nice summer and think about what I'm telling you: nobody is perfect. <T01-S07/16.05>

It is thus possible to conclude that S07 managed to turn the teacher's supportive behavior to her own advantage and purposes in order to reiterate discussion of her personal emotional states.

The teacher's initial and spontaneous inclination towards affiliation, with advice and appreciation as its components, becomes a valuable structural interactive feature for students to maintain their elected roles of Troubles-Tellers and be in touch with the teacher on a personal plane. This required the students to avoid ratifying either advice or appreciation. In contrast, when appreciation[71] is accepted and ratified by the students, the impression is created that the exchange is being treated as a

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[71] Appreciation included gratifying the students as to their achievements in general, as the following illustrates:

[...] Anyway, I congratulate you all on your very nice St. Valentine's performance, actually video-tape. I find the idea of the video-tape really funny and unusual. Congratulations again. [...] <T01-S22/08.02>

I'd like to take the opportunity of this journal writing activity to tell you how much I enjoyed reading your paragraph about "A good friend". I think you've expressed your ideas in a clear and logical structure using good English. I hope you'll go on studying and loving the language the way you have demonstrated to love it so far and wish you to always improve and widen your knowledge of it. [...] <T01-S14/13.03>

Good! That's an interesting discovery. I'm sure you'll have more fun in the next few months because we'll learn a lot more. By the way, Debora, your pronunciation has greatly improved. I'm very happy about that. <T01-S19/11.10>

[...] You are a very spontaneous person and you should always try to be the way you are. [...] <T01-S09/14.03>

[...] Secondly, I like your decision of facing the situation. It reflects maturity and responsibility. Good luck for the future. I'm sure you'll be much happier with the next school-report! <T01-S08/15.02>

Service Encounter, with advice-giving as a constituent part of the exchange (cf. Jefferson & Lee 1981).

For example, the interaction with S16 below, shows how the teacher's expressing appreciation for something the student was not supposed to do in class — S16 openly admitted she had not followed the lesson on that particular day — encourages the student to open up and have a non-threatening exchange with the teacher. The student's turns are reported below for clarification:

> WRITE DOWN ONE THING THAT YOU HAVE LEARNED TODAY <p> I learned some new words of the article I'm very proud to know so many words and I also learned that, sometimes my imagination runs wrong. I haven' learned so much this morning because I'm very tired because yesterday was an exhausting day <S16/11.10>

Not to discourage the courageous and frank attitude adopted, the teacher rewards S16's sincerity by appreciating her statement and returns suggestions:

> I appreciate your being so sincere. In fact, it's not always possible to be performant. Try to catch up and study the article when you are more "awake" and "in shape". <T01-S16/11.10>

This time, the directives "Try to catch up and study the article" are ratified and commented by the student, who in all likelihood does not intend to go beyond an instrumental exchange with the teacher on this particular occasion. Not only this, but the teacher's appreciation gives the student freedom to take on — forcibly it can be argued — a dissenting tone about lessons being not exactly interesting in her opinion:

> One thing I've learned today <p> I've learned that I hate philosophy and especially St. Agostino Later I've learned That Medieval Drama is extremely boring. But I've also had some fun talking with my schoolmates during the change of hour. Thank you for the consigli you gave me last week. I read the article another time and finally I actually understood it. I think this /work/ is interesting because so we learn how to express our ideas without being afraid of what you think of me. But why do we have to make a schoolwork about grammar? I don't like it

also if I have to learn it. Be sure, I'm learning it for the test. <S16/18.10>

The above analysis shows that affiliation for the students' daily little dramas meant for the teacher to individualize her responses as much as possible to meet the students' need to have someone assess their own particular experiences and feelings in what Aston (1988) calls news assessment routine.[72] This has entailed a reduction of the social impact of the teacher's positional incumbency on the learners and treatment of the exchange in interactional terms. On the other hand, the students' ratification of the teacher's appreciation of their individualities and/or achievements seems to imply definition of role-relationships in terms of a service encounter with institutional roles largely maintained though within a broad space of *manoeuvre*.

3.3.2 Suggesting a Course of Action

Teacher urging is considered to be one common pedagogic attitude educators use to promote learning. According to Shuy (1988b:130), teacher urging includes such functions as predicting, complaining, giving of directives and evaluating. In this section, directives will be analyzed as being one major characteristic feature of the teacher's writing in the journal. As noted earlier, the teacher makes frequent use of directives in the form of imperatives, especially at the beginning of the year (cf. 3.3 above). As it turns out, because this function is linked to status and age, the act of giving directives "is the special domain of the teacher" (Shuy 1988b:130), though students contribute their share of directives with significant emphasis and confidence, too:

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[72] Unlike the matching assessment routine, the news assessment routine requires sharing of attitudes and feelings which belong to the personal sphere of our interlocutors, who have provided for self-disclosure. The recipient's preferred behavior calls for affiliation rather than agreement, typical of matching assessments instead (cf. 3.4.3 below).

> "Remember that you've promised to show me the pictures of your father's horse I'm very interested in watching them!!" <S22/15.03>

Mention should be made, however, of change over time. The teacher's way of dispensing directives, in fact, changed as to form, content and quantity during the course of the year. This seems to have depended on the roles played by the participants during the interaction. If the exchange is in line with positional incumbencies, then the teacher's suggestions are defined in teacher-student terms and involve a high quantity of directives given in the form of imperatives. If, on the other hand, the students and teacher remain in their personal roles, the interaction is characterized by soft and mediated advice-giving to avoid strong imposition as in naturally occurring interactions. The following illustrates that in the beginning teacher's imperatives were the rule when interacting with students:

> [...] Try to catch up and study the article when you are more "awake" and "in shape". <T01-S16/11.10>
>
> [...] Try to understand what's going wrong. [...] <T01-S11/13.10>
>
> [...] <p> Also, memorize the words you might need some of them in your conversations. <T01-S22/11.10>

As demonstrated above, the use of directives is primarily linked to content and reflects the teacher's desire to fulfill her duty as a teacher. The tone of the suggestions is, however, laconic, detached and almost mechanical.

Nonetheless, later in the year, imperatives are replaced by more appropriate forms for suggesting a course of action. When S15, for example, reported in her journal how her father's yelling would hurt her feelings during an argument, the teacher included the following advice in her turn:

> [...] Maybe you can try to talk to him. Why don't you explain to him that you would rather discuss things nicely? You should also consider the fact that perhaps your father is short of temper and loses his patience easily. You know, my father was just like your father! He used to yell and shout all the time when there was no need for it. He

> improved and became more reasonable when I got married.[73] <T01-S15/20.10>

The teacher not only resorts to a "Why-don't-you" sentence to suggest a course of action, but also frames the move to introduce advice and give a possible explanation for the father's behavior. The above entry shows a change of tone and attitude, touching on the tones of affiliation and support like here:

> [...] If I were you – as you are asking for advice – I would look ahead, trust the future and be serene. Why don't you consider the positive aspects and things of your life? You have several Federica! Above all, I wouldn't force his behaviour. If it is over it is over you have to accept and face it. So, I wouldn't call him. [...] <T01-S16/14.03>

Thus, it appears that topic dictates the quantity and form of the teacher's suggestions. According to the discussions being held, in fact, the two parties shift from positional into personal roles and back. When dealing on a personal basis, the teacherly accents fade away.

However, the data also show that once the relationship is well-established, discussion of school matters becomes more symmetrical. Compare the following suggestion to the previous ones:

> [...] <p> Well, beside spending some time in the UK next summer, you could start reading short stories in English (I can give you a few) in order to improve the language. Reading is really good, I mean, excellent exercise. [...] <T01-S09/14.02>

Although the student wanted to overcome her linguistic problems and reach higher levels of proficiency in English (that is although she was defining her relationship with the teacher in institutional terms), the teacher's response gave approval to the student's previous decision to spend some time in the United Kingdom, and emphasized things the teacher had found helpful in studying languages. Apart from the initial "you could start reading short stories in English," then, there is a timid attempt in this turn to move the focus on the teacher.

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[73] For the record, I should perhaps confess that by adding this little story to my entry, I intentionally deceived my student. Actually, I have always had a very good relationship with my parents, even when I was a teen-ager. So, when the student recounted me her story - on other occasions she had, in fact, spoken to me of how her father could not accept her failing a few subjects - I felt very sorry for her and wanted to share her grief with her by claiming that I had experienced the same humiliation.

This change of perspective seems to become the teacher's general approach to giving suggestions in the journals. In fact, the teacher starts to propose personal stories as a course of action. Stories will be discussed later in this chapter, but for the moment, it is enough to consider that by suggesting students build up on the teacher's own experiences they were given alternatives to reflect upon and draw their own conclusions. This was the teacher's way of showing respect for each student and sharing problems or situations very close to their own:

> Well, the first thing you have to understand, Emanuela, is that human beings are complex. Man's psychological structure is so complicated that even psychoanalysts don't know exactly how our mind works. Anyway, there are people who are certainly insincere and hypocritical (I hate hypocrisy). You also meet people who take pleasure in making somebody suffer or are just happy to see others' feelings hurt or plans frustrated. Again, jealousy and envy: a wide range of feelings indeed. I don't really know what to say; I am aware of the problem and when I deal with people who are psychologically "weak" I just don't pay attention and put up with them. Friends. I carefully choose the people with whom I want to have a close relationship. Maybe I once had a jealous friend. That was many years ago. But I tell you, it was HER problem not mine. In conclusion, I think that getting along with people or friends is not always easy but it is not impossible. Consider that behaviour and demenour are determined by psychological situations which can sometimes be serious. Human beings are made up of contradictory feelings: You can't help that. <T01-S15/07.02>

Words are an important tool to wield power and those who hold the floor in a sense control their audience. In the case of interactive journals, dispensing advice may translate into a desire as an advice-giver to hand down experience to be shared with the interlocutor rather than imposing a course of action. By shifting the emphasis from the role of hearer to that of speaker, therefore, the teacher explicitly minimized the imposition contained in advice-giving (Blum-Kulka & Levenston 1987), in an attempt to make her contributions more pragmatically acceptable.

3.4 Designing the Entry to Suit the Recipient

The ability to shape discourse to the needs of one's interlocutors is one feature of conversational competence. In order to be sanctioned as a valuable interactant, it is not sufficient to prove co-operative,[74] contributing meaningful and relevant information to the ongoing interaction. A speaker is also expected to be able to single out his/her recipient's conversational needs and incorporate them in the discussion. As Calò (1990) points out, it is not enough to ratify the discourse of our conversational counterparts to show understanding: conversational efforts need also somehow to be oriented towards those partners:

> [...] da un lato il valore di un enunciato è ratificato dalla reazione del co-partecipante, che ne seleziona uno dei significati possibili e a questo – e solo a questo – reagisce, dimostrando così la sua comprensione e, insieme, rassicurando il primo parlante dell'efficacia del suo contributo; dall'altro chi parla disegna il suo discorso tenendo conto del ricevente: "Con 'recipient design' intendiamo una molteplicità di aspetti nei quali il discorso di una delle parti in una conversazione è costruito o disegnato secondo modalità che mostrano un orientamento e una sensibilità nei confronti dell'altro o degli altri co-partecipanti". (Calò 1990:7-8)

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[74] According to Grice's Co-operative Principle, interlocutors adhere to four maxims of conversation, which are always assumed by participants to regulate their interactions. Cooperative behavior includes:

Quantity:	Make your contribution as informative as possible. Do not be more informative than required.
Quality:	Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
Relation:	Be relevant.
Manner:	Be perspicuous. Avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Be brief, orderly, and polite.

(Grice 1975:45)

In the beginning, the texts were "neutral," formulaic, standardized, and could have been written for anybody. And anybody could have answered with a suitable reply, as illustrated below:

> One thing I'm happy/sad about <p> I'm happy because tomorrow at midday I will be in Barcelona <p> I'm happy because Barcelona is a beautiful city <p> I'm happy because I thingk we'are going to have a lot of fun <p> I'm sad because we'are going to visit a lot of museums. <p> I'm sad because I think Italy is going to lose the match <S13/15.11>

In the following sections, some of the strategies the students developed to indicate an orientation to and an interest in their interlocutor's discourse needs are examined. As mentioned earlier, (cf. 2.3 above), the teacher replied to the students' topics and tried to develop an interesting conversation with each one of her students.[75] Most of the time, however, in the turns following the teacher's answers, the students would ignore the teacher's contributions and commence new topics. The interaction was formally proceeding, but nothing indicated deep conversational involvement. The students were pursuing their communicative goals alone: there was almost no topic continuation on their part, making more difficult the finding of topics of shared interest. What conversational analysts call recipient design was not being developed.

This study contends that as the students began to see the teacher as a worthy interactant deserving their attention and their conversational efforts, they also began to understand the journal activity as a whole and in turn could develop more effective English communication than would have been attained without the journals. This study also argues that recipient designed entries entail a re-definition of institutional roles and pave the way to achieve reciprocity through the negotiation of more restricted attitudes (cf. 4.1 and 4.2 below).

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[75] This attitude contrasts with what Long & Porter (1985) refer to as the lockstep: "the predominant mode of instruction [...] in which one person (the teacher) sets the same instructional pace and content for everyone, by lecturing, explaining a grammar point, leading drill work, or asking questions of the whole class."

3.4.1 Addressing the Teacher as "You"

In the early entries and in the majority of the students' journals, there was quite understandably no direct and explicit reference to the teacher as being their conversational counterpart. A significant number of the students, in fact, were intentionally avoiding addressing the teacher directly, and this had implications for the response. Thus, when replying to the journals, the teacher was in an undefined conversational zone.

The students, in fact, were producing entries for an abstract, impersonal teacher, a figure with hardly any distinctive human and personal traits. The following examples, written in October and January, are typical:

> Write down one thing that you've learned today. <p> Today, during the english lesson I've learned the significance of a lot of words. I've discovered one thing that I didn't know, I mean that crimson. is a colour. [...] <S31/11.10>
>
> One thing I have learned today <p> Today I have learned the difference between the -ing form and the simple present. <p> I think I have understood all, that my English teacher has spoken about, but I don't know, if my classwork will be good. I have learned the verb <ITQ> to like <itq> too, ~~but~~ and this is very important for me, because last year when my English teacher had spoken about it, I ~~have~~ had understood nothing or less than nothing. [...] <S08/13.10>
>
> <U> A Journal <u> <p> Perhaps I'll be a bit boring, but in this moment I'd like to speak about my holiday in New York. [...] <p> I went to N.Y. with the most of my schoofriends and a few teachers, like the English's and German's teachers. <p> But, during this holiday, we wanted to thank the English's teacher, miss Morini, in particolary, because we visited the city with her help, based on her N.Y. knowning. [...] <S05/25.01>

The institutional role of the teacher seems to preclude the use of a direct and more personal "you": in avoiding it, the students show considerable sophistication and ingenuity in their strategies for maintaining indirection. The students resort to pragmatically incorrect third-person forms, which are perhaps felt as being less intimate, though it was evident from other performances that they exactly knew that "you" was to be used with everyone. S08, for example, is reporting two different learning experiences with two different teachers. To discriminate between the first "my English teacher" from the second "my English teacher," the student relies on the use of verb-tenses and time words. Even more revealing is S05's way of thanking her interlocutor for a school trip the year before, formulated indirectly like a report. Indeed, the problem here for the students is role: "the teacher" in the classroom does not typically represent personal human qualities. A teacher of English is even more impersonalized because of the language barrier and the culturally different worlds the language taught revives.

The transition from "she," "the teacher," the English lesson," to the personal pronoun "you" was an important shift, at least from a functional and pragmatic perspective. In a one-to-one exchange such as the journal, where the interaction may develop authentically, and where the participants are potentially free to play their positional or/and personal roles the way they best choose, both students and teacher began to realize they could no longer hide behind the institutional roles of corrector and grade-seeker. The journal practice called for more, and they started to alternate one role or the other according to their communicative needs at the moment of writing. Their conversational aims were slowly changing through the negotiation of roles and journal genre, and seeking the involvement and co-operation of the interlocutor meant finding a proper way to address the teacher. The corrections in the texts written in October below, reveal the students' uncertainty over this issue, and suggest that deciding how to address the teacher in the journal was a pragmatic issue, not a grammatical one.

> One thing I'm still wondering about. <p> Today we have spoken about the dinasty of the Tudors, and ~~we said~~ the teacher said many dates. One of these is very important: 1485, but I don't know what ~~one~~ another one represents: 1603. [...] <S21/20.10>
>
> Unfortunatly today I have made bad figuraccia with her when she asked me if I was an estroverted persona I anwersed ~~you~~ her that I was a narrow minded person. [...] <S12/20.10>

As an alternative to indirect allusions of the type illustrated above, passive and impersonal sentence constructions were also used, and these sounded even more distant than the institutionalized figure of teacher evoked so far:

> [...] We were also told that in a week we will have a test. In ten minutes the lesson will be over and we will go to to a mostra su Mirò, which I think it will be interesting. We will see. <S06/13.10>

On the one hand, this kept the journal from developing conversational activity. On the other, the students had not had many chances to address the teacher in any other manner. They knew little about the teacher. Beyond the well-defined roles, the students and teacher had had very little opportunity to team about the other.

The shift to more personal interaction coincided with the emergence of the pronoun "you" to refer to the teacher. Although not universal, the replacement of "the teacher" with "you" also preceded topical orientation and continuation across the journal entries.

In oral interaction, the students showed that they were well aware that the personal pronoun "you" was to be used in English for both the intimate "tu" and the courtesy form "Lei." The straightforward tone the journal required perhaps embarrassed them, as most Italian students are uncomfortable with such personal interaction with a teacher. In the Italian school system, it is still widely assumed that a respected teacher will also keep students at a proper distance, and in most cases this means addressing the teacher as "Lei." The journals provide only one, perhaps revealing instance of "tu," in "volerti":

> [...] You've <A> a <a> ~~very~~ special heart and I hope you give ~~the~~ opportunities to <A> the <a> others* <FT> *(...sometimes I'm asheimed of volerti (ing form) <A> così <a> bene) <ft> to know it better. At the beginning of this year ~~you didn't like me very much~~ I hadn't a good opinion on you but all have changed. [...] <p> thank you <p> Laura <S09/16.05>

If on the one hand, the pronoun seems to be employed rather casually, on the other hand, one may wonder whether the English "you" was not felt by this student as being too ambiguous for expressing her feelings.

Table 3.7 below displays the chronological emergence of the pronoun "you" and shows that for most of the students, addressing the teacher as such was problematic. The use of "you" required not only time, but especially maturation of the teacher's role that approved of the students' shift towards a more intimate interpretation of the relationship. Even more significant is the high number of students who never used "you." This demonstrates that for many students it was not possible to negotiate positional roles out of what it appeared to them still a mere classroom activity to be carried out in the traditional way.

Thus, designing entries purposefully for the teacher implied, in the first place, an effort to circumscribe and individualize the teacher as an interlocutor and privileged reader. Because journal writing, if properly negotiated, may develop an awareness of pragmatic complexity, the students will start to use the language also more functionally. As can be seen in the following examples, in fact, when the students use the pronoun "you," their entries not only sound molded for a well-defined recipient, but also demonstrate the students are actively pursuing their communicative purposes:

> [...] Thank you for the consigli you gave me last week. I read the article another time and finally I actually understood it. I think this /work/ is

interesting because so we learn how to express our ideas without being afraid of what you think of me. But why do we have to make a schoolwork about grammar? I don't like it also if I have to learn it. Be sure, I'm learning it for the test. <S16/18.10>

<i> Sorry for the paper but I've found only this and here you have all the space you need to answer me back! The answer to my "secret": 1 obviously, the person who gave me the flowers was my boyfriend. 2 the reason? 2 years and a half we are together. I didn't write you about that because I ~~didn't~~ thought you weren't interested in, but now that I know you are, I want to tell you more about that. <S21/07.02>

Thank you for your congratulations about our video-tape, but I think we <A> still <a> have to improve ourselves, because we haven't played at best of our possibility!! Next year ~~wil~~ we will give you and your husband a part in our next video-tape, so will have fun with us for Carnival!! <p> Remember that you've promised ~~me~~ to show me the pictures of your father's horse I'm very interested in watching them!! <S22/15.03>

Third-year Class		**Fourth-year Class**	
S01	never	S15	yes/February
S02	never	S16	yes/October
S03	never	S17	never
S04	never	S18	yes/March
S05	yes/February	S19	yes/March
S06	never	S20	yes/January
S07	yes/February	S21	yes/February
S08	never	S22	yes/October
S09	yes/October	S23	never
S10	yes/May	S24	never
S11	yes/May	S25	never
S12	yes/February	S26	yes/March
S13	never	S27	never
S14	yes/December	S28	never
x	x	S29	yes/October
x	x	S30	never
x	x	S31	yes/October
x	x	S32	never

Table 3.7: Use of the Pronoun "You" to Address the Teacher

3.4.2 Personal Information: Sharing Experiences and Points of View

Personal information seems to be central to the mutuality of the interactions which gradually developed out of the journal activity. The dialogue journals have evidenced, in fact, a progression in what appears to be one of the participants' main goals in the exchange: the disclosure of information regarding their personal lives, interests and beliefs. Students in particular seemed to consider personal information as central to the development of their entries. Less than a week after the teacher had begun the activity in her classrooms, she was recording in her own personal diary[76] that, although the students' main concerns remained with school on a regular basis (cf. 3.2 above) — and when this was not the case, the choice would anyway fall on impersonal topics — the students were nonetheless intentionally steering the interaction toward more personal issues, managing to create the right context for the teacher's direct and personal involvement:

> <U> One think I have learnd today <u> <p> ~~Today~~ I ~~have~~ learned some new words. like surgeon to cheeck in, out. etc. I think that the today lesson was very interisting I enjoyed the video very much. it. tells the story of two – <A> siamese <a> twinse. that under go a surgery operation. the ~~speaker~~ //journalist// of the C.N.N. speak very fast but I have met not ~~very~~ many difficulties. ~~to understend~~ //in understanding// what she ~~was saing~~ //said//. I have leared the use of new structures like ~~how~~ what's the weather like. Unfortunatly today I have made bad figuraccia with her when she asked me if I was an estroverted persona I anwersed ~~you~~ her that I was a narrow minded person. In that moment I feel very stupid. I hope not to do such incredibole mistakes. and to improve my Englirh. So I can realize my dream: travelling around the world <S12/20.10>

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[76] October 20, 1993 [...] The journal is a very interesting and fascinating experience. I feel (and it's only the second time I have collected their short compositions) as if I knew each of them intimately. Well, it's true I am a very, an extremely emotional person and their confessions really get me! [...]

October 26, 1993 [...] Going back to the journal, I'm still very enthusiastic about it and I still think my students are nice. Today I have answered to the kids in the third year. One of them was telling me how worried and preoccupied she was after having told me she was narrow-minded. I was not grading her performance. So, they must seek their teacher's esteem and appreciation beyond technicalities. I have noticed that when they can, students shift towards more personal issues no matter what the title is. This is especially true with the older kids, the girls in the fourth year. One of them was recounting me how bad her relationship with her father can sometimes be. I have not yet answered to her but she has all my solidarity; [...].

Though focused on the development of the title, S12 did not miss the opportunity of talking about her emotional state and perception of the surrounding world. Thus discussions would gradually expand into more intimate and more personal elaborations as the year went by. The students' apparent purposes for revealing the most personal aspects of their lives were manifold. Some of them were just eager to involve the teacher in their individual growth as they were discovering and keeping track of it:

> [...] Last years I was a different person outside and inside me. <p> I weighed 77 kg I was a bomb and noone wanted to go out with me and my personality was...How to say, well it was <A> so <a> different. I'm sure I wasn't sympatic <U> person <u> because I was unhappy. and I think that when a person isn't happy can't be always sympatic to all the other. [...] <S09/14.02>

Others instead were providing accounts of their personal experiences, usually of a painful nature, in order to elicit advice, while at the same time working down to rationalize the problem:

> When I think I am 18 it doesn't seem to be true, because nothing has changed. <p> I turn<A>ed<a> 18 on Monday and I feel always more depressed. I think about all the happy people near me and I feel jelousy for them. I feel alone but I also discovered the importance of a <U> real <u> friend. I understood that a real friend is the only person ~~we~~ who really can help you. Well I found a friend and lost a boyfriend. OK, it had not to be something forever but it seemed to be the right boy in the right moment. I fell in love 7 months ago with a boy of Milan. Things went always better everything seemed to be bright and happy and after 51/2 months everything has finished and ~~a~~ everything's become dark and sad as it was before. Somebody tells me that it's better so because he was too old (don't ask me his age) and because he lived in Milan but I don't think so. He was old but we had the same ideas and the same mentality of me and so there has never been problem between us. It seems incredibly but it's really so I'm not joking. I don't know what to do. I'd like to phone him but I don't know if it's right or not so I spend the most of the time thinking what to do. What would you do if you were in my situation? He's a few years younger than you and maybe you can advise me for the best. Please help me! Sorry for the paper but I'm at school and I haven't a bigger one! <p> Bye --- <S16/14.03>

The autobiographical approach to writing dialogue journals was not just structurally significant.[77] It is true that "personal topics give considerable autonomy to the students [and] the freedom to have some creative control over what is written" (Vanett & Jurich 1990:24). However, a genuine effort was perceived on the students' part to get in touch with the teacher in a different, more rewarding and motivating way. By dealing so insistently with personal matters the students were manifesting their desire not only to disclose their most inner self to the teacher but to induce the teacher to actively contribute her personal thoughts and opinions, as well as her share of personal topics. By the end of the school year, in fact, the amount of reciprocal disclosure of personal information had reached considerable proportions in the journal entries.[78]

Staton & Shuy (1988:211) have documented that "what increases most significantly [in the journals] is the teachers' involvement in personal issues and opinions." Now, considering that "disclosing personal information" is fundamental in "establishing and maintaining personal relationships" (Aston 1988:221), the teacher's contributions of personal information and/or involvement in the students' personal lives was especially important for the conversational outcome of the interaction. Personal information paved, in fact, the way to the students' and teacher's search for mutually interesting topics to share. The outcome in conversational terms was simply extraordinary. For example, S21 decides to tell the teacher about a beautiful "bunch of flowers" she has received. She neither specifies why she has been given the flowers nor from whom she has received them.

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[77] In all likelihood, personal information seemed to them one most natural of the probably several ways to get started in the writing process (Vanett 1990).

[78] As far as I was concerned, I was not reluctant at all to reveal sides of my personality and welcomed the idea of sharing personal information with my students as I deemed it important to prompt the negotiation of progressively more restricted attitudes to reach intimacy (cf. 4.2 below).

She gives instead a description of where she has placed the flowers and why she cannot dry them up "this time." The teacher's reaction is that of finding out more information about the flowers to complete the conditions for a felicitous account and inquires in a most straightforward manner about the sender and the reasons for his/her action:

> <i> Sorry to answer you back on this piece of paper but the things I'd like to tell you are too many and I just need more space. To begin with, I'm very curious to know who gave you the wonderful bouquet of flowers and why, because I think it's not fair to go on telling me how extraordinary and sweet-smelling and fragrant these flowers were without saying a word about the sender! Also, I have to admit that it is always a nice surprise to receive flowers and plants especially. The only problem with flowers is that they wither and die so soon! Some time ago I read Eric Fromm's "To have or to be" (great book) and if you ever read it, you'll realize that the author's point of view on picking flowers is totally different from ours. That's to bad but I think he is right. Another point I wish to make is that I like the idea of drying up flowers; in fact I have dessicated flowers in the house too. What I even did with bouquets of flowers was take pictures of them. I have beautiful pictures of a gorgeous bouquet my mother gave me for my birthday a couple of years ago and they still look nice! That could be an idea too! <T01/22.01>

For this student it is a pleasant surprise to discover that the teacher is not only interested to share with her what she considers an important event of her life but also that the teacher likes flowers, is used to receiving flowers for her birthday, and has "desiccated flowers in the house too." The discussion is then extended to a book the teacher has read and which disapproves of picking up flowers. [79] The turn ends with the teacher's suggesting a course of action. The conversation which ensues extends over four long turns and is significant to the extent to which it validates the idea that students hardly think of themselves and the things they do beyond school activities as being interesting for their teacher — S21 openly admits, in fact, that she “thought” I was not at all “interested” in knowing more about it:

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[79] My purpose was that of inducing my student to reflect over our contradictions and partake with me what had become my attitude on picking flowers ever since I had discovered that book.

> <i> Sorry for the paper but I’ve found only this and here you have all the space you need to answer me back! The answer to my “secret”: 1 obviously, the person who gave me the flowers was my boyfriend. 2 the reason? 2 years and a half we are together. I didn’t write you about that because I ~~didn’t~~ thought you weren’t interested in, but now that I know you are, I want to tell you more about that. Since I have known him he has given me a lot of bouquets of flowers because he knows I love flowers. <p> Thank you for the advice to take pictures of them, but I ~~didn’t~~ don't understand what you mean by PICTURE; if you mean “drawing” I haven’t tried so far; if you mean “photograph” I ~~have~~ have taken photographs of my fowers very often. In fact, the last time I took a photograph of them the same day I wrote ~~you~~ to you. And thank you also for the title of Eric Fromm’s book, I hope I’ll have the time to read it during the summer because now I’m very busy. But I have a question for you: Did you read it in Italian or in English? Because if ~~you red~~ it is in English it is probably too difficult for me. In 10 days we have “S. Valentino” ~~I~~ and if you want us to go on writing open journals I will ~~so~~ tell you what I will have received on this occasion...I have a big problem: I have no idea for the present for my boyfriend. I must think and think about that. Manu. <S21/07.02>

The management of this interaction confirms that for the teacher to ratify her students’ personal information and offer her share of personal information in the journal was a means of reaching affective convergence with the students as an unparalleled, communicative outcome achieved in the classroom. Thanks to the revelation of their interests and habits, teacher and students could find deep interpersonal connections affording them the opportunity to move from the positional into the personal spheres of their personalities, and hence, into the negotiation of more restricted attitudes to reach intimacy (Aston 1988). Take for example:

> What you have written is really beautiful! In fact, I can feel a lot of emotion in your words. You do sound like a real mother. It is important to love animals and respect them because they are a sort of connection with that natural world we so often tend to forget. I once used to live in the country and I can say my best friends were animals especially dogs (I love dogs!). [...] I do hope though I can some day

> keep a dog, a German Shepherd: absolutely my best friend. <T01/22.11>

S22 had dedicated her previous turn to her horse and to animals in general. The emotion which could be perceived through her words prompted the teacher to emphasize her love for animals in her reply. The teacher especially expresses her fondness for dogs.[80] Well aware of where she could find a world to share, S22 starts her following entry by describing her horse:

> As I have already told you, my little horse was born six days ago. So, as I have noticed that you love animals, I would like to tell you something more about this little girl, whose name is Mahtab (in Italian this means: ~~raggio~~ "Chiaro di luna") She's very small, with long grey legs and big eyes. She's light brown, but ~~her~~ has got dark brown head and neck. <p> (She's a rainbow!) Curiosity is her f~~r~~irst peculiarity, in fact she's a girl! Mathab is friendly and has a very good charac~~h~~ter, but when she has the so said "5 minutes", she becomes <A> a <a> creazy horse, good only for the rodeo! [...] <S22/23.01>

Notwithstanding this, S22 is not yet happy with the personal connection she has established with the teacher. She further works up to bringing the two of them even closer through a comparison between her horse and her dog — the teacher's favorite animal — so as to be able to better converge with her interlocutor, and make the invitation which follows, relevant and acceptable:[81]

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[80] This information was especially significant to me, as I was alluding to a German shepherd my father had given me when I was born and who had been my friend for ten long years.

[81] The teacher's response to this entry is here given to show the kind of interaction that sharing personal information gave rise to in the journal. To note that this exchange is a good example of matching stories (cf. 3.4.3 below) and not just because the interlocutors share the same topical area - a fundamental pre-requisite for storytelling - but also for the convergence of stylistic features in the texts, such as description-description and repetitions: "Well, first of all I would like to thank you a lot for the invitation. I would love to see your little horse and maybe I could show you the pictures of my father's horse. She is a "girl" too; in fact a "woman" as she is not that young any more and her name is Silla. <p> She has got a nice white little star right in the middle of her forehead and (I don't know much about her lately) was quite irritable Just crazy! My father used to do steeplechase and was always lying flat on the ground. It was terrible! I'm still wondering how he managed not to break his neck! Now he doesn't partecipate in horse-races any more, he just takes it easy and looks after his beloved horse. As far as I am concerned I don't ride. I tried when I was 12 but I fell down this horse we had at the time and whose name was Luna (beautiful horse) and never

> [...] Sometimes she really looks like a dog, in fact she behaves as Guendalina, my springer-spaniel dog. For this reason, I'm sure that you will like ~~her~~ Mathab a lot and I invite (!?!) you to see her, whenever you have time! <S22/23.01>

The resulting personal investment in the interaction was generally rewarding. Because students and teacher were able to induce changes in the way teacher-student interactions are usually managed, the exchanges progressively turned into genuine conversations as personal experiences, genuine points of view and real interests started to be shared. The successful conversations with the students reflected an effort to reproduce, in the classroom, the quality of social life interactions, where students could have a leading role in the exchange and treat issues also of a personal kind.

Usually students were excited about finding out that, after all, the teacher was a human being:

> JOURNAL <p> Note please that I'm writing on a big piece of paper! You ended your answer to my last journal, writing that spring is coming: But it doesn't seem to be so. I'm happy to know that I'm not the only one depressed in this "classroom." [...] <S16/07.02>

What was becoming most evident, in fact, was that:

> Because we [the teachers] wrote about our lives, the students were able to see us as individuals as well as teachers and as people with strengths and weaknesses outside the writing class, just as we came to see them as complex individuals through their writing. (Vanett 1990:53)

The constraints experienced in the classroom context rarely offer this opportunity. Tradition has unremittingly tried to impose over the centuries a model of classroom communication which is in reality an obstacle and misleading model for the full commitment of students and teacher to the communicative process, since it obscures the complexity inherent in language acquisition and in the learning process as a whole.

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considered horse-riding any more. It was a very funny scene, one day I'll tell you about it." <T01/23.01>

Discussion of personal matters on a more equal footing also promoted questioning in the journals — and therefore enhanced interaction indirectly (cf. Questions in 3.2.1 above). A pattern was isolated in fact in the way personal information was administered. A correlation seems to exist between the teacher's decision of dispensing personal information and number and/or quality of questions. Students give their share of personal information but almost systematically do not ask questions unless the teacher contributes her share of personal information in return. On the other hand, when the teacher shares her personal experiences with the students, the students who receive it question the teacher as if they were entitled to do so by an unstated agreement. The degree of familiarity the teacher decides to establish through the exchange and discussion of personal information with her interlocutors is interpreted as a sign of reducing the social distance imposed by the norm and because questioning is generally regarded as a threatening act in itself, the students seem to need this familiarity before they can probe and invade the teacher's privacy with questions.

Personal information was a further step toward the individualization of the participants, whereby teacher and student incumbencies developed into well-defined and exclusive identities. After reading the students' journal entries what one recollects is not a name, nor even a code but the stories of well-defined personalities, such as the Flower-Girl, the Horse-Girl, and so on. This is an indication of successful achieved intimacy between the students and the teacher and a clear evidence that personal talk tends to be included naturally in discourse contributions as a strategic choice to manifest aspects of the participants' personalities to build up rapport.

3.4.3 Matching Stories

Storytelling constitutes another important interactive element of the journal activity. A story can be defined as a past-time narrative illustration of an event experienced by the storyteller or people close to him/her (Polany 1979). Ryave has observed that stories in talk often generate conversational contributions which aim at the reproduction of other stories:

> On occasion a story appears as an isolated instance surrounded by a variety of possible conversational structures, but more frequently it seems to be that stories are manifested in clusters of two or more. (Ryave 1978:113)

Thus, stories are, in the first place, a further example of adjacency pairing, and when told, they make relevant the contribution of a second story (cf. 3.2.1 above), though "the sorts of relationships that exist between the two stories extend well beyond the simple matter of sequential adjacency" (Ryave 1978:120). In fact, clustered stories seem to be organized around conversational patterns in such a way to include the main points touched on by the previous storyteller in his/her recounting, thus binding the participants together in a common social experience (Ryave 1978, Aston 1988).

Secondly, the social act of storytelling in conversation puts heavy constraints on the participants. The storyteller feels responsible for suspending the turn-taking system and for confining his/her hearers to a story recipient role. He thus tries to avoid loss of face by orchestrating an interesting story worth being listened to and shared. A story recipient is, in turn, called upon to attend closely to the story in order to contribute relevantly in some way:

> A story recipient is [...] constrained to make comments related to the story, acknowledging, as it were, in his responses that the story (and thus the storyteller) is being understood and, if possible, appreciated. [...] Furthermore, the story recipient must engage in some talk about the story after it is completed, helping the storyteller connect the storyworld to the conversation. (Polanyi 1982:519)

Thirdly, stories are topically oriented. They must be constructed around a point, a moral or a maxim derived from, or to be related to, the ongoing conversation. Stories that lie outside the topical areas of the participants' talk sound, for this reason, odd or misplaced. In addition, storytellers take great care in evaluating and claiming validity for the point presented in the story itself.

In her analysis of narrative genres, Polanyi (1982:509) distinguishes stories from reports. She notes that these two "narrative discourses" are "linguistically similar" but "socially distinct" (ibid.) as to the interactive consequences involved at the discourse level. As previously stated, storytellers make clear what the message of their story is and give overt indications about its interpretation. Conversely, the meaning of reports is left to the report recipient to extrapolate, although reports all the same revolve around happenings and states of affairs that may involve the speaker directly. Hence, storytelling seems to be a particularly relevant social act in its own right. Its social implications are of interest for this study. Through stories, the participants oriented towards one another to become better acquainted.

This study documents changes in narrative discourse structuring: the students seem to progress from reports to storytelling. In the beginning, when the entries are still conceived as a written assignment, the students write mainly reports on their school day (with low information value, since the teacher knew exactly what had occurred in the classroom) to show the teacher how much they had learned or how well they had followed the lesson. Later in the year, they start to develop interesting stories where a point is made and constructed to share it with the teacher. For example:

> [...] I knew this morning that you have a horse called Silla[82] (this name remembers something to me!) I have horses and I rode for 2 or 3 months. But then I broke a leg and so my mother's forbidden to me to ride anymore. [...] <S16/07.02>
>
> [...] Yes, my father's horse's name is Silla and when one utters this name the first person we think of is the school caretaker! In this case, it's a horse! So even if Silla reminds you of our Silla, don't think of her as a horse! Horses are very nice but I am afraid of riding because I fell down to the ground – on pebbles!!! – when I was 10 and I decided not to ride any more. [...] <T01-S16/07.02>

Student and teacher come to agree across turns that horse-riding may be dangerous. At least, as a consequence of their own experiences, they were both induced to abandon this sport. What is interesting about exchanges of this type is to see how conversational participants reveal a special point to their interlocutors for sharing. These points are not only carefully chosen, but seem to become even more relevant when the storytellers negotiate their stories around progressively more restricted attitudes. Take the above example. The way student and teacher behave in matching their stories demonstrates that stories are not just topically oriented. Here, it is clear that the participants narrow their topic towards additional details of the story so that the general topic "horses" is broken down into a more intimate category focusing on the physical incidents that happened to both student and teacher. This other set of stories further corroborates the contention that attitudes and feelings are shared through stories.

> Journal <p> I'm incredibly tired today. I've slept for an hour but I'm always tired. It's a week that I always wake up at 6 and then I can't sleep any more. Maybe it's because of the end of the semester but I can't afford another one (I'm always telling so every year) I just hope

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[82] I had a long and interesting discussion about horses and animals, in general, with S22 (cf. 3.4.2 above), but never said a word with this student of my father having a horse. The fact that some students shared the journal experience with their classmates and especially exchanged information about myself is, in my opinion, indicative of the favor with which this activity was adopted in the class, on the one hand, and of the interest and curiosity the students had in their teacher.

> the weather will better otherwise I fall in depression, and don't study any more. <S16/19.01>
>
> At the end of the semester everybody is exhausted but that's part of the game you are playing. And of course, after a week you have been waking up so early no wonder you feel tired and worn out. Before the Christmas break something very similar happened to me too. I would wake up around five or six in the morning and couldn't go back to sleep again. Even worse, I could not easily fall asleep at bedtime. I was obsessed by school, texts, corrections. Don't think that this can only happen to students. Well, after the semester is over, we will (both sides, I mean) slow down a little so as to recover some energy for the final rush. And smile, spring is coming! <T01/19.01>

Because function and form do not correspond in speech, this story about the student's depression could as well be read as a complaint about end-of-term excessive school work. However, the teacher seems to have acknowledged it as storytelling,[83] working instead to carve her own story from the same frame of reference to validate the student's point. Through this exchange of 'woes,' student and teacher seem to have succeeded in revealing their understanding for each other's lot and, in fact, in the following turn the student expresses her satisfaction for the teacher having manifested solidary affect: "I'm happy to know that I'm not the only one depressed in this 'classroom.'" <S16/07.02>

According to Aston (1988:255), matching assessments and news assessments are solidary and supportive routines which enable speakers to negotiate solidary and supportive gaps, respectively (cf. 4.1 below) throughout their conversational work. In matching assessments, participants seem most concerned to show agreement on a point which is common to both interlocutors, whereas in news assessments what is relevant seems to be the story recipient's affiliation for his/her storyteller. The difference between the two types of assessments seems therefore to lie in the recipient's reaction to treat the story as one to which he/she may have independent access, generating a new story of his/her own or one which only the storyteller can claim as his/her own, generating affiliation in a report structure. In discourse terms the effects induced are thus quite different:

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[83] In fact, there seems to be an initial attempt at affiliating with the student.

> [...] one appropriate response to stories in matching assessments is the provision of a second story illustrating the same point, in the news assessment routine it seems inappropriate to respond with a second narrative: to do so would propose independent access to the state of affairs in question. (Aston 1988:266)

The journal activity displays instances not only of both such examples, but of matching stories which are evidently built on a fragile balance between these two aspects, with predominance of final affiliation in the end. Consider the following:

> What I think about my test. <p> I was a little bit angry when I saw my note because I have studied a lot and my result don't rapresent my hard work. I have made foolish mistake and that is why I fell afraid when I saw the withe paper of my test, I fell afraid of doing something wrong and this regullary happens. I must change myself and my relashionship with the school I must become more sure of myself and conut on my posibility. In this way I can make beiter results and everything will go better I have fand this test a little bit difficoult but because it was made of long exercises with some diffucuts phrase. Next time I hope to do my best. <S12/13.12>
>
> I remember that when I was still in school and a teacher would hand out tests and papers I felt very insecure too. I think it is quite natural to have doubts about oneself. Nonetheless, it is important to keep the lack in self-confidence and the resulting feeling of precariousness under control. <p> If you study hard, if you think you have understood the teacher's difficult explanations, there's no point in feeling frustrated and insecure. I'm sorry the grade you got did not reflect your efforts. As you say, work on your relationship with school and tests and you'll be more gratified when you find out that it pays to be agressive. <T01-S12/13.12>

S12's recounting of her disappointment on receiving a grammar test seems to begin as a complaint (cf. 3.2.1 above), but is largely ignored by the teacher as such, except for her "I'm sorry the grade you got did not reflect your efforts." However, the student works toward the construction of a story — through remedial work it may be argued — where she manages to make her point: "I must change myself and my relashionship with the school I must become more sure of myself and conut on my posibility." The teacher assesses in turn her student's experience, showing agreement through personal evidence of experience not of a difficult relationship with school, but of the "feeling of precariousness" students generally experience in the classroom: "I remember that when I was still in school and a teacher would hand out tests and papers I felt very insecure too." But because she realizes that the student's point is slightly different, the teacher begins a process of generalization to dissociate herself from the student's problem. This aborted story leads up, in this exchange, to affiliation through the teacher's comments and advice.[84]

What seems to be the case in the above examples is that the first two teacher's matching stories appear to provide ratification for agreement to be reached, whereas the last story seems to serve the double purpose of agreeing on the student's point and at the same time affiliate with the student's lot. If this is true, then, the story may have been conceived and treated as a hybrid, half-way between a report and a story:

> In interactional contexts reports [...] appear to differ from stories in calling for affiliation rather than agreement: not a "How true!", but a "Poor you!" (Aston 1988:266)

It is also interesting to note that these students' stories focus above all on "personally interesting material" (Polanyi 1979:211). Research on stories in talk has shown that when storytellers decide to expose personal information, their risk of being misunderstood and their stories not appreciated is high. It is therefore likely that in taking such a risk, the storytellers of this study must have expected a high return from their conversations. What the results suggest is that because of the students' involvement in interactional talk, the stake may well have implied interactional outcomes. Stories would thus have been used as a rapport-building strategy.

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[84] The final teacher's words: "As you say, work on your relationship with school and tests and you'll be more gratified when you find out that it pays to be agressive" sounds rather encouraging when we think that the following student's turn is characterized by an angry complaint about school (cf. S12's complaint in 3.2.1 above).

4 Dialogue Journals as a Learning Context

4.0 Preliminaries

The previous chapter described a number of features of written exchanges between students and their teacher in dialogue journals. One of the participants' major concerns seemed to be the exploration of the possibilities of this genre, not as assigned written language work, but as a mutually satisfying means of expressing and sharing meanings.[85] To suit their communicative purposes, the students started to engage in procedures of negotiation to circumscribe the limits of this intermediate form of interaction between written and oral discourse to find their own interpretation of the exchange. After a few months of exchanging journals, one student considers the interaction a real conversation:

> [...] I mean, we can speak, better write, about many other things, also if today I've no idea of what I can tell you! <S22/08.02>

Another writes:

> [...] I don't know what to write again so I greet you. <p> Laura <p> I SIGN BECAUSE I CONSIDER IT LIKE A LETTER. <S09/14.03>

In the present chapter, it will be argued that the pragmatic complexity of the discourse which emerged in the course of the journal writing experience is unparalleled in the traditional language classroom.[86] This discourse is inseparable from the ways in which students and teacher collaborated in the joint production of that discourse, re-negotiating roles and inventing more symmetrical modes of communication in an effort to share and ratify contributions of a personal nature. This allowed students to have more access to the ongoing interaction over time and play a significant role in the communication process.

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[85] For dialogue journal genre cf. Lucas 1990.

[86] Because of social differentials, in the journals the students needed to carry out more negotiation than the teacher to claim their conversational rights. In a study on NS-NNS oral interaction, Tonini (1993) has also found collaboration to be a key-element in the negotiation of discourse. She, however, observes that when negotiation of meaning is the focus of the interaction, the NS carries out most of the negotiatory work.

Research has demonstrated that much learning proceeds from the situational factors provided by the context with which the learner interacts: the more meaningful the context, the more intake for the learner. As stated earlier, however, the traditional classroom exposes students to artificial uses of the L2, largely contributing to a representation of the learning process as a series of fixed and mechanical operations. Because highly institutionalized, the classroom context is hardly negotiable and, for this reason, unlikely to offer learners opportunities to exercise capacity in discourse, especially for interactional purposes. When interpersonal rapport is viewed as hindering, instead of facilitating, acquisition, comprehension of the L2 socio-pragmatic dimension is made problematic in school.

Dialogue journals are a form of continuous, interactive, functional writing which may provide teacher and students with a meaningful learning context. During the one-to-one exchange made possible through interactive journals, participants may overcome the limits of traditional classroom discourse and achieve more conversation-like modes of expression, which in Levinson's (1983) words are "the matrix of acquisition," where meaning and roles are adjusted to and jointly negotiated with a real audience.

The analysis of the data in this study has focused on some of the means which students and their teacher used to establish and maintain accessible and acceptable "written conversational activity." This final chapter centers on some implications of this activity for L2 pedagogy.

4.1 Re-negotiating Positional Roles: "They Show you another Face of your Students and Show me another Face of the Teacher"

In citing Firth, Aston (1988:250) reminds us that "the power of speech to affect relationships is magic," and also that "friendships can be made and wrecked through talk" (Aston 1988:76). Examination of the data has demonstrated that through the dialogue journal activity, students and teacher managed to redefine their institutional roles and establish a relationship as specific individuals through discourse. According to Leslee Reed, "that's essentially the first thing that the journals do for us: establish rapport" (Reed 1988:57).

One characterizing feature of dialogue journals, in fact, is that they make it possible for co-membership to develop and knowledge to be shared (Peyton 1988c, Reed 1993) through role negotiation. Co-membership — to use Erickson & Schulz's term (1982) — derives from "those shared attributes of social identity" speakers discover they have in common (Peyton 1988c:191). It was observed that co-membership in Erickson & Schulz's interviews "began when [students and guidance counselors] shared something outside of the school context" (Peyton 1988c:190-191). This means that, generally speaking, the participants made ample use of interactional speech.

Likewise, what emerged from the interactive journals was that one important key to success in structuring this type of communication seems to have been the frequent re-negotiation of positional roles as a means of "reaching affective convergence in a solidary and supportive sense"[87] (Aston 1988:227). Solidary affect — Erickson and Schulz's co-membership — relates to the participants' common world, through which common social identity is attained. When expressing solidary affect, roles are symmetrical and involve chat. Supportive affect, instead, involves the sharing of feelings of one participant for the other's world and implies distinct identities. Here roles are complementary with disclosure as a typifying activity, but because supportive affect is generally reciprocal, symmetry of roles is also achieved (cf. 4.2 below).

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[87] Aston (1988) underlines that affective convergence needs to be manifested as solidary or supportive affect to establish a binding one-to-one relationship with our interlocutors to construct rapport. It is, however, through supportive affect especially that speakers let their interlocutors know that they are genuinely interested in them as persons and regard them chiefly as human beings.

In her exploration of the Gonja culture, Goody (1978b:40) has noted that in the teaching-learning context, the "intimacy factor" (ibid.) is intentionally excluded so that status constraints can be successfully maintained. Similar attitudes towards teacher-student role relationships, Goody reports, seem to have characterized educational systems throughout the world and at all times, "from ancient Sumeria of 2000 BC to medieval Europe to contemporary Japan" (ibid.):

> The consistency across cultures with which teachers insist on being given respect and obedience is striking. [...] The continuing preoccupation of contemporary Western teachers with effective discipline suggests that this stress on respect and obedience towards the teacher is still a significant issue. (Goody 1978b:40-41)

Perhaps teachers' need to protect themselves from their subordinates is a sign of how uncomfortable they feel in their contrived, institutionalized roles. However, status and intimacy are important constitutive elements in understanding and determining social life. Because our social world is organized through the careful management of role alternation in interaction, the social aspects of authentic exchanges should be seen as enhancing the L2 learning context, not detracting from it by undermining the teacher's authority.

The following entry illustrates that the kind of approach the journal activity is imprinted with contrasts dramatically with classroom discourse and rigid role division:

> Elisa, what you have written is extremely beautiful! First of all, I appreciate your openness and sincerity but if on the one hand I admit the test was difficult, on the other hand I think students can only improve and learn by trying to solve difficult tasks. I have such a good opinion on you as a person and a student and I have absolutely no doubts on the fact that you'll improve your grades a lot. Probably, you have to get used to my way of presenting the language. Don't worry, I'm sure your motivation will "yield great satisfaction". Also, I'd like to congratulate you on your dream. It is so beautiful to be a teacher even if students criticize us! <T01-S14/13.12>

As one of the students in this study writes, the journal experience is enjoyable for its personal implications: "I like this kind of work (journals) because they show you another face of your students and show me another face of the teacher."[88] This student's statement emphasizes that when students write for an authentic interlocutor (not a corrector and a mark-giver), they are stimulated to experiment with the language to attain their communicative purposes through functional language use. At the same time, when journal writing allows students to make first-hand discoveries about the teacher, the students are encouraged to rethink their ideas about school, and consequently, the teacher may be perceived as less adversarial, more cooperative, as illustrated here:

> I think you're a very special person and I would like to have the opportunity also in the future to write to you and when I am older I would like to become one of your(s) <A> ? <a> friend because you have given me a lot. (S09/16.05)

The journal enabled students and teacher to allocate a space to those feelings which very often remain unexpressed in student-teacher interaction.

In the journals, the transition towards "the performance of personal roles, as played by someone regardless of incumbency" (Aston 1988:219) required the creation of an interactional context which permitted affective convergence, and instantiated through "discourse processes of negotiation which bring worlds into correspondence" (Aston 1988:76). Interactive writing thus provided a context — natural, it can be argued — where rapport was achieved through the negotiation of a point of view or/and the enhancement of the interlocutor's face.

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[88] And indeed, the journal actually made it possible for me to see my students the way I had always wanted to see them and to make myself seen the way I wanted them to see me.

It is the contention of this research that the creation of a context for developing interpersonal relationships in the classroom offers students opportunities to understand, through individual rapport building, the larger issue of learning as a whole. The variety of language displayed in the journals appears to be one encouraging outcome of allowing students come to terms with their own potential in language learning.

4.2 Building up Mutuality and Trust: Making the Exchange more Symmetrical

In the previous sections, it was argued that the re-negotiation of students' and teacher's positional roles into more personal ones in the journals contributed to invalidating a few of the norms which have come to be considered as the foundations of classroom life: teacher-centered lessons, teacher initiation and total control of the learning process by the teacher (cf. 1.2 and 1.3 below). The data analyzed in Chapter 3 show how the student-teacher role-relationships were modified and conversational power re-distributed on a more equal footing. In short, more symmetrical modes of expression became possible when social distance was reduced.

In Tannen's (1990) theoretical construct of "symmetrical" and "asymmetrical" conversations, "symmetrical" is used:

> [...] to describe dialogues that result in mutual understanding [whereas] asymmetrical [denotes] dialogues that distance one party from the other. (Tannen 1990, cited in Bean & Zulich 1992:289)

More symmetrical communication in the classroom thus "involves risk, self-doubt, and ultimately a desire to bridge traditional professor-student roles" (Bean & Zulich 1992:295) to create the proper conditions whereby mutuality and trust can develop between students and teacher.

According to Widdowson (1983), human communication is controlled and directed by two opposing forces. Speakers (or writers) not only strive throughout an ongoing conversation so as to protect their territory (the territorial imperative), people also need to feel part of a whole and consequently try to behave cooperatively in order to make themselves understood and socially accepted (co-operative imperative):

> It is the co-operative imperative which impels people to put their schemata into contact with others, and there are procedures available to service this impulse. These co-operative procedures are concerned with making information *accessible*, [...], all the time working towards a satisfactory convergence of worlds so that understanding can be achieved. But communication is not only a matter of making intentions clear, or understanding the intentions of others. [...] The territorial imperative has also to be respected. So it is that many of the procedures we use are protective and are directed at ensuring that what is said is not only accessible but also acceptable to others. (Widdowson 1983:47)

Conversational work is thus a compromise whose success or failure largely depends on the extent to which speakers intend to respect their interlocutors' territorial imperative as well as renounce part of their own territory, while working to comply with the cooperative imperative to construct discourse together. As a result, communication is achieved through the participants' joint efforts to find a balance between these two opposing forces, whereby optimally interlocutors can be informative without appearing to impose on the other.

The mutual recognition of the co-operative and territorial imperatives is fundamental for the implementation of strategies that aim at successful negotiation of meaning and face, a principle conversationalists cannot ignore during their social interactions. In fact, Widdowson continues:

> Notice that although I have set the co-operative and territorial imperatives in opposition, the mutual recognition of territorial rights and of the need to protect face is a co-operative contract of a kind [...]. (Widdowson 1983:79)

The conversational activity carried out in this student-teacher interactive journals indicates that the participants created a context for collaboration where more symmetrical patterns of communication could be achieved as a result of reciprocal efforts to find a suitable interactive/interactional compromise in the exchange. This became possible especially when the turns started to focus on personal matters. The language of the journals reflects, in fact, a willingness to search for mutually interesting topics on which to build beyond school boundaries: S19's entries in 3.2.1, S21's interaction in 3.2.2 or S22's exchange in 3.4.2 are only a few examples of how co-membership and mutuality developed. Students would write when urged by a precarious psychological situation as in S09's exchange in 3.3.1; they would get angry and become threatening even with the teacher, as in S12's interaction in 3.2.1; students did not hesitate to reflect upon what was right and wrong in life (cf. S17's, S18's, S29's or S31's entries in the Appendix); they were courteous to the teacher and appreciated her work as in S12's turn in 3.2.1 or S16's entry in 3.3.1, and evaluated their own achievements and plans for the future (cf. S09's, S10's, S11's interactions in the Appendix).

It is significant noting that the students generally led the way in revealing information about their personal experiences, and this seemed to satisfy their need to reach higher and higher levels of intimacy with their teacher. As seen above in 3.2.2, topic continuation across turns was one important indication of students' and teacher's growing personal involvement in the interaction to open up lines of authentic communication and negotiate entries specifically designed for their interlocutor. The topics which permitted this were all of a personal nature. Also, questions were increasingly formulated by students when the teacher had volunteered her share of personal information to the students. The personal pronoun "you" was used to address the teacher directly and appropriately only when more reciprocity was felt as being attained in the interaction. Through discourse, the students also expressed their desire to receive the teacher's affiliation by striving to remain in a Troubles-Teller role.

The creation of more symmetrical communication between the participants was accompanied by a degree of affective convergence. However, as pointed out in 4.1 above, solidary affect involves symmetrical roles, whereas supportive affect involves complementary roles, with disclosure as a typical feature. To generate symmetry of roles, supportive affect must be reciprocal. But supportive affect was not reciprocal in the dialogue journals: the teacher would affiliate with the students, but the students rarely reciprocated with support after a teacher's contribution.[89] The students may well have felt that offering supportive affect to the teacher was still just too face-threatening and inappropriate.[90] More symmetrical communication was achieved instead when the participants engaged in solidary chat to exchange personal opinions or experiences (cf. S21's or S22's interactions).

4.3 Writing in a Socially Meaningful Context

Successful experience of satisfactory personal rapport in a language increases opportunity for use and enhances motivation in that language (Corder 1967, 1986). Long & Porter (1985) complain that, in the L2 classroom, students do not have enough opportunities to use the language; the language used does not reflect genuine communication; students are indiscriminately obliged to follow a learning pace irrespective of their individual educational needs; the classroom does not provide a supportive and affective climate to experiment with the language. Their pedagogical claim is that small-group work (including pair work) can be efficient to overcome these limitations and enhance motivation in the learner.

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[89] The following is a rare example of student's affiliation in the journal entries: "Dear Prof Morini <p> thank for your answer by that I have understood <A> a <a> lot of thinks. I recognise that the job of a teacher is very hard and difficult. When you find some students that aren't interested in what you are explaining." <S12/14.02>.

[90] Probably, the students needed more time and more writing to develop affiliation in their journals as was the case with questions.

It seems very likely, therefore, that a one-to-one individualized interaction with the teacher can have interesting pedagogical implications in promoting L2 learning. The dialogue journals evidenced that, when engaged in genuine communication, students write extensively about topics of their own interest, thus increasing opportunities for language use. The language is used functionally and at the students' own level of proficiency. In an authentic interaction with the teacher, students pursue their communicative purposes for their real needs, negotiating meaning and role in the L2. Reading and writing functionally turn into meaningful and functional activities where expectations are created through the exchange.

It is evident from the data that interactional speech was at the basis of the communicative process of this dialogue journal interaction. That is, the students and teacher turned the exchange — and consequently learning — into a matter of affective relevance, and this fact left its mark on the patterns of discourse, which bore little resemblance to classic classroom discourse patterns. Writing in a socially meaningful context then empowered students, inducing them to become real writers and recover the interactivity connected with writing:

> [...] by writing about themselves, students [became] engaged in communicating through writing, rather than simply trying to fill a predetermined organizational structure with words and sentences to satisfy a teacher's requirements, as often happens in composition classes. (Lucas 1990:104)

Because dialogue journal writing focuses on authentic communication, the style generated is more like oral speech, with functions and patterns typical of speakers' oral abilities. For this reason, journals are an important tool for practicing the developmental stages of language acquisition necessary to develop abilities for more formal writing (cf. Peyton 1988a, Shuy 1988a;b, Vanett 1990), which is assumed to be acquired when students write to learn coming to terms with the process (among others Brodine 1990, 1995).

When writing interactively with a real audience, students are allowed to explore ideas in their L2, and develop a more refined and complex scheme of reasoning by confronting thoughts and opinions with the teacher, who provides feedback in the form of a response and not a correction of language errors. The feedback students get from the teacher is necessary for acquisition to occur (Seliger 1983, Ellis 1994). In interactive writing, the teacher's replies are not only valuable as a linguistic model, but especially because, the responses are formulated within the students' frames of affective relevance:

> "Modeling" a target behavior from this perspective is not effective unless it occurs within a jointly accomplished task, one in which the child's goals are being met (even if different from the teacher's goals). Such modeling appears to be more effective to the extent that it incorporates or "appropriates" whatever initial actions the learner produces. (Staton 1988d:303)

Thus, the more meaningful and authentic the context in which learners are invited to operate, the better the quality of their own responses are likely to be. In foreign language courses, where virtually all of the learners' contact with the language comes through the school, convincingly genuine contexts for language use are especially essential. The data analyzed here suggest that dialogue journals can provide one such context.

4.4 Conclusions

Dialogue journals are effective means of language acquisition. The way they were used in this student-teacher written interaction demonstrates that when the focus is on language use rather than language usage, students are afforded the opportunity to exercise capacity in discourse for the creation of infinite meaning.

> The use of journal stresses the search for meaning rather than control of the subject matter or student. The dialogue journal's creation of the "dual being" (teacher and student in communication) involves the educator in a constant examination of educational and personal philosophy, rationale for classroom conduct, communication of substance, and, again, assumptions. (Meath-Lang 1990:8)

Through the meaningful social interaction that the journals made possible, the negotiation of face also became relevant for the participants who were able to achieve cognitive and affective convergence, especially. The students' entries displayed that over time the language was being used more and more functionally, with sustained socio-linguistic development. Exchange after exchange, the way the students and the teacher began to connect with one another slowly changed and their language reflected such a change. At the point where mutual understanding and sharing of attitudes was reached or about to be reached in the exchange, a whole variety of pragmatic aspects took over, suggesting that language complexity comes from using the language for one's own purposes.

Dialogue journals clearly evidenced in the data that interactive writing can become a rapport-building device. The traditional teacher-student relationship necessarily entails a "rapport gap," since it is rare to have a flow of authentic feelings in the classroom context. Because journal writing is meant to be "a primary *channel for self-expression*, for giving one's own opinions about events and expressing feelings openly" (Staton 1988b:37), it was exploited by students and teacher to bridge that gap. The enhancement of interactional ability in learners has important pedagogical implications, as learning how to manage interactions in the foreign language is considered fundamental not only to have successful exchanges in the L2 language community, but also to enhance motivation.

What is mainly at issue in the classroom then is communicating a broader idea of the language, an idea reflecting the social implications which would enable students to make sense of the learning context through development of interactional ability in the L2, and through it, they could find their own ways of controlling the learning process. Journals are thus a tool for overcoming the transactional bias of language pedagogy and turn the classroom into a learner-centered activity.

Indeed, writing interactively can become a valuable tool in the classroom to individualize instruction and engage teacher and students in authentic social communication especially, in order to create a teaching/learning context where participants can perceive a meaning through their efforts:

> [...] part of the task of pedagogy is to help the learner refine his perceptions of what is involved in learning a foreign language, and to help him critically examine his attitudes to it. (Aston 1988:24)

The students' reactions to dialogue journals indicate that having a meaningful relationship with the teacher is pedagogically and personally important:

> Journal: <p> I would like to say: THANK YOU! <p> First of all because you've ~~learnt~~ taught <A> me <a> ~~w~~how to learn English but above all HOW TO LOVE IT. Now I'm happy when I can study english without stress. [...] Thank you also because you have helped me ~~because~~ to know you better. I think you're a very special person and I would like to have the opportunity also in the future to write to you and when I am older I would like to become one of your(s)<A>?<a> friend because you have given me a lot. [...] <p> thank you <p> Laura <S09/16.05>

4.5 Indications for Further Research

This study is focused only on a limited number of features of the data. Many other features could be analyzed and other approaches adopted to explore the variety and richness of the language generated in dialogue journal writing. Questions of politeness, which have not been explored in this study, are an interesting area for research and could illustrate student-teacher relationships more exhaustively. Besides the ways students and teacher experiment with dialogue journal pragmatic features, quantitative and qualitative approaches to the lexico-grammatical aspects the data display could be applied as a further potential area for study. Also, the joint personal nature of dialogue journals means that every journal writing experience will be different. It would be interesting to see other teachers' data and other students' written interactions to understand dialogue journal writing in a foreign language context.

Additional Tables
Appendix
References

Additional Tables

Question %

Type of Question	**Q-Type Totals**	**Q-Type %**	**Student Question**	**STotals Q-Type**	**SQ% QType**	**SQ% STotals**	**SQ% QTotals**
Opinion Question	**38**	**34%**	Opinion Question	**36**	**95%**	**55%**	**32%**
Personal Information to S	**18**	**16%**	Personal Information to T	**9**	**100%**	**14%**	**8%**
Reflective Question	**11**	**10%**	Challenge Question	**5**	**56%**	**2%**	**1%**
Language-related Information	**9**	**8%**	Language-related Information	**4**	**100%**	**8%**	**5%**
Personal Information to T	**9**	**8%**	Subject-related Information	**3**	**33%**	**6%**	**4%**
Topic Restatement Question	**9**	**8%**	Permission Question	**3**	**100%**	**5%**	**3%**
Challenge Question	**4**	**4%**	School-related Information	**3**	**100%**	**5%**	**3%**
Subject-related Information	**3**	**3%**	Rhetorical Question	**1**	**50%**	**5%**	**3%**
Permission Question	**3**	**3%**	Information Question	**1**	**50%**	**2%**	**1%**
Suggestion Question	**2**	**2%**	Topic Restatement Question	**1**	**100%**	**2%**	**1%**
School-related Information	**2**	**2%**	Reflective Question	**0**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**
Rhetorical Question	**2**	**2%**	Suggestion Question	**0**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**
Information Question	**1**	**1%**	Invitation Question	**0**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**
Invitation Question	**0**	**0%**	Directive Question	**0**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**
Directive Question	**0**	**0%**	Personal Information to S	**0**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**
Individual Totals	111	100%	**Individual Totals**	66	59%	100%	59%

Question %

Type of Question	Q-Type Totals	Q-Type %	Teacher Question	TTotals Q-Type	TQ% QType	TQ% TTotals	TQ% QTotals
Opinion Question	38	34%	Personal Information to S	18	100%	40%	16%
Personal Information to S	18	16%	Reflective Question	11	100%	24%	10%
Reflective Question	11	10%	Language-related Information	6	67%	13%	5%
Language-related Information	9	8%	Topic Restatement Question	4	44%	9%	4%
Personal Information to T	9	8%	Opinion Question	2	5%	4%	2%
Topic Restatement Question	9	8%	Suggestion Question	2	100%	4%	2%
Challenge Question	4	4%	School-related Information	1	50%	2%	1%
Subject-related Information	3	3%	Rhetorical Question	1	50%	2%	1%
Permission Question	3	3%	Information Question	0	0%	0%	0%
Rhetorical Question	2	2%	Challenge Question	0	0%	0%	0%
Suggestion Question	2	2%	Permission Question	0	0%	0%	0%
School-related Information	2	2%	Subject-related Information	0	0%	0%	0%
Information Question	1	1%	Invitation Question	0	0%	0%	0%
Invitation Question	0	0%	Directive Question	0	0%	0%	0%
Directive Question	0	0%	Personal Information to T	0	0%	0%	0%
Individual Totals	111	100%	**Individual Totals**	45	41%	100%	41%

Question Types

Types of Questions	**S07**	**T01**	**S08**	**T01**	**S09**	**T01**	**S10**	**T01**	**S11**	**T01**	**S12**	**T01**	**S14**	**T01**
Opinion Question					11		1		1		2	1	2	
Reflective Question		1				2						3		1
Language-related Information		1			3	2		1		1				
School-related Information					1	1								
Directive Question														
Personal Information to S		1		2		3		1		2		2		1
Personal Information to T					2						1			
Information Question					1									
Subject-related Information														
Topic Restatement Question					2	1								
Challenge Question					2									
Invitation Question														
Permission Question					1						1			
Suggestion Question														
Rhetorical Question									1					
Individual Totals	**0**	**3**	**0**	**2**	**23**	**9**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**2**

Question Types

Types of Questions	S15	T01	S16	T01	S17	T01	S18	T01	S19	T01	S21	T01	S22	T01	S29	T01
Opinion Question	7		4				1								3	1
Reflective Question								1								2
Language-related Information		1														
School-related Information																
Directive Question																
Personal Information to S				1								2		1		1
Personal Information to T	2										2		1		1	
Information Question																
Subject-related Information									1		1				1	
Topic Restatement Question				2							1		1		1	
Challenge Question			1										1			
Invitation Question																
Permission Question													1			
Suggestion Question		1		1												
Rhetorical Question				1												
Individual Totals	**9**	**2**	**5**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**4**	**2**	**4**	**1**	**6**	**4**

Question Types

Types of Questions	S31	T01		Q-Type Totals	Q-Type STotals	Q-Type TTotals	Q-Type %	SQ %	TQ %
Opinion Question	4			38	36	2	34%	95%	5%
Reflective Question		1		11	0	11	10%	0%	100%
Language-related Information				9	3	6	8%	33%	67%
School-related Information				2	1	1	2%	50%	50%
Directive Question				0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Personal Information to S		1		18	0	18	16%	0%	100%
Personal Information to T				9	9	0	8%	100%	0%
Information Question				1	1	0	1%	100%	0%
Subject-related Information				3	3	0	3%	100%	0%
Topic Restatement Question		1		9	5	4	8%	56%	44%
Challenge Question				4	4	0	4%	100%	0%
Invitation Question				0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Permission Question				3	3	0	3%	100%	0%
Suggestion Question				2	0	2	2%	0%	100%
Rhetorical Question				2	1	1	2%	50%	50%
Individual Totals	4	3		111	66	45	100%	59%	41%

Question Types

Students	Opinion Question	Personal Information Question to T	Topic Restatement Question	Challenge	Language-related Information Question	Subject-related Information Question
S07	0	0	0	0	0	0
S08	0	0	0	0	0	0
S09	11	2	2	2	3	0
S10	1	0	0	0	0	0
S11	1	0	0	0	0	0
S12	2	1	0	0	0	0
S14	2	0	0	0	0	0
S15	7	2	0	0	0	0
S16	4	0	0	1	0	0
S17	0	0	0	0	0	0
S18	1	0	0	0	0	0
S19	0	0	0	0	0	1
S21	0	2	1	0	0	1
S22	0	1	1	1	0	0
S29	3	1	1	0	0	1
S31	4	0	0	0	0	0

Question Types

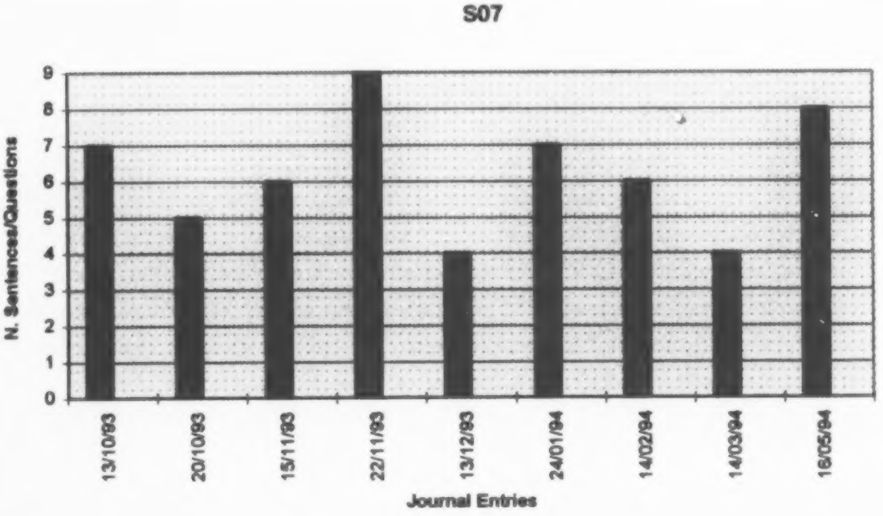
Students	Permission Question	Information Question	Rhetorical Question	School-related Information Question	Reflective Question	Directive Question	Invitation Question	Suggestion Question	
S07	0	0	0	0					
S08	0	0	0	0					
S09	1	1	0	1					
S10	0	0	0	0					
S11	0	0	1	0					
S12	1	0	0	0					
S14	0	0	0	0					
S15	0	0	0	0					
S16	0	0	0	0					
S17	0	0	0	0					
S18	0	0	0	0					
S19	0	0	0	0					
S21	0	0	0	0					
S22	1	0	0	0					
S29	0	0	0	0					
S31	0	0	0	0					
									Totals

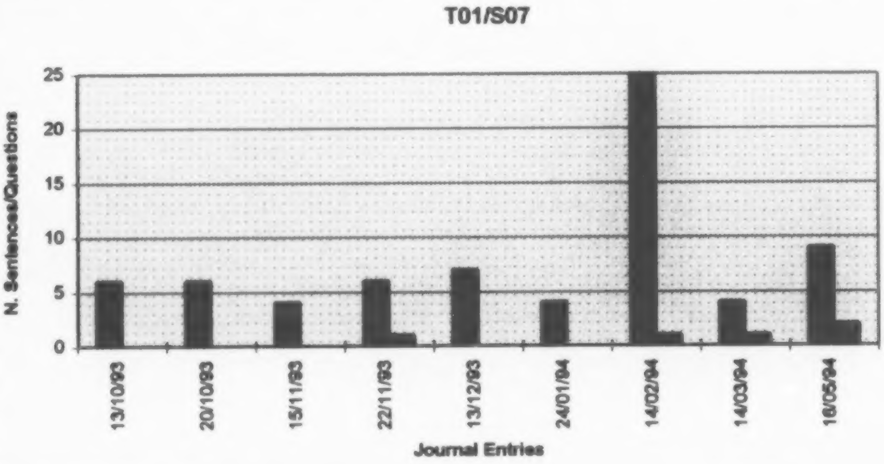
Question Types

T01 Questions	**Totals**
Personal Information to S	18
Reflective Question	11
Language-related Information	6
Topic Restatement Question	4
Opinion Question	2
Suggestion Question	2
School-related Information	1
Rhetorical Question	1
Information Question	0
Subject-related Information	0
Directive Question	0
Challenge Question	0
Invitation Question	0
Permission Question	0
	45

S07 Questions

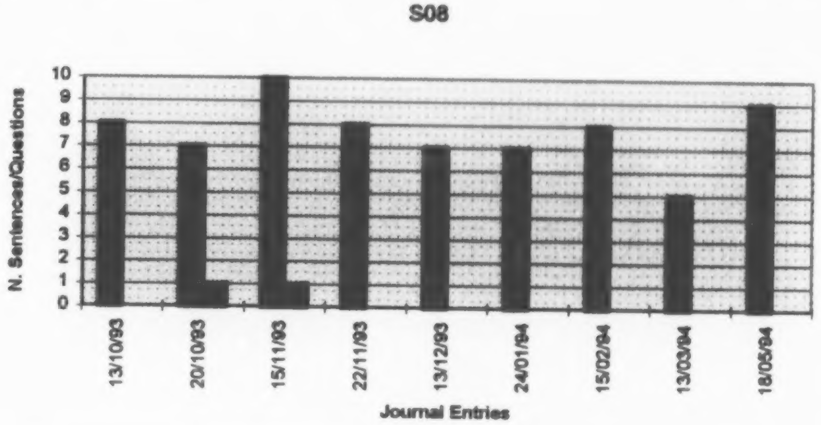
Date	S07/Sentences	T01/Sentences			S07/Questions	T01/Questions	S07%	T01%
13/10/93	7	6					0%	0%
20/10/93	5	6					0%	0%
15/11/93	6	4					0%	0%
22/11/93	9	6				1	0%	17%
13/12/93	4	7					0%	0%
24/01/94	7	4					0%	0%
14/02/94	6	25				1	0%	4%
14/03/94	4	4				1	0%	25%
16/05/94	8	9				2	0%	22%
	56	71			0	5	0%	7%





S08 Questions

Date	S08/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S08/Question	T01/Question	S08	T01
13/10/93	8	9			0%	0%
20/10/93	7	6	1		14%	0%
15/11/93	10	7	1		10%	0%
22/11/93	8	7			0%	0%
13/12/93	7	9			0%	0%
24/01/94	7	3			0%	0%
15/02/94	8	11		1	0%	9%
13/03/94	5	9			0%	0%
18/05/94	9	7		1	0%	14%
	69	68	2	2	3%	3%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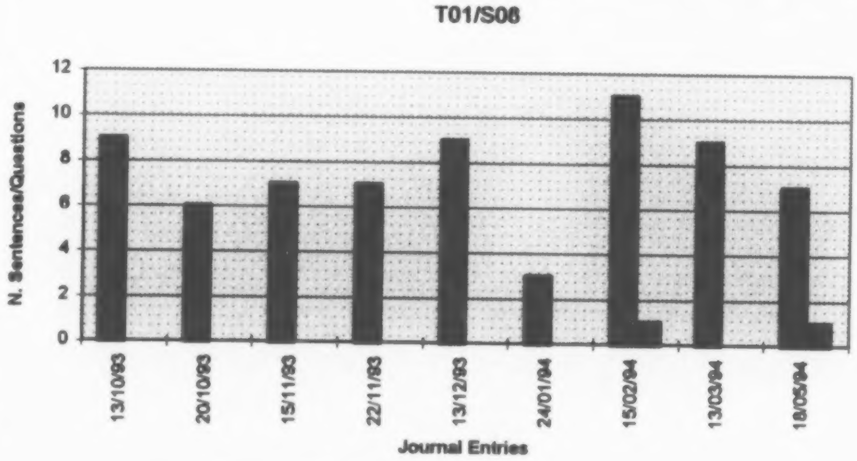
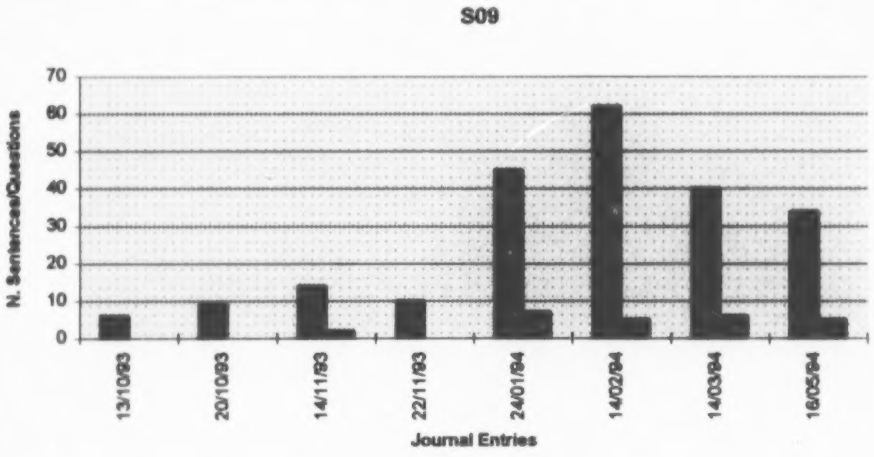

T01/S08

S09 Questions

Date	S09/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S09/Questions	T01/Questions	S09%	T01%
13/10/93	6	10			0%	0%
20/10/93	9	9		2	0%	22%
14/11/93	14	7	2		14%	0%
22/11/93	10	7			0%	0%
24/01/94	45	43	7	4	16%	9%
14/02/94	62	32	5		8%	0%
14/03/94	40	27	6	1	15%	4%
16/05/94	34	28	5	2	15%	7%
	220	163	25	9	11%	6%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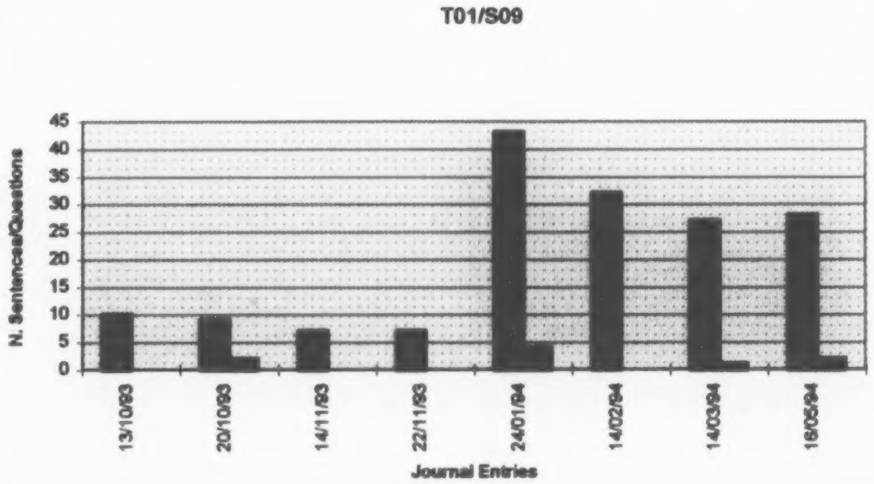
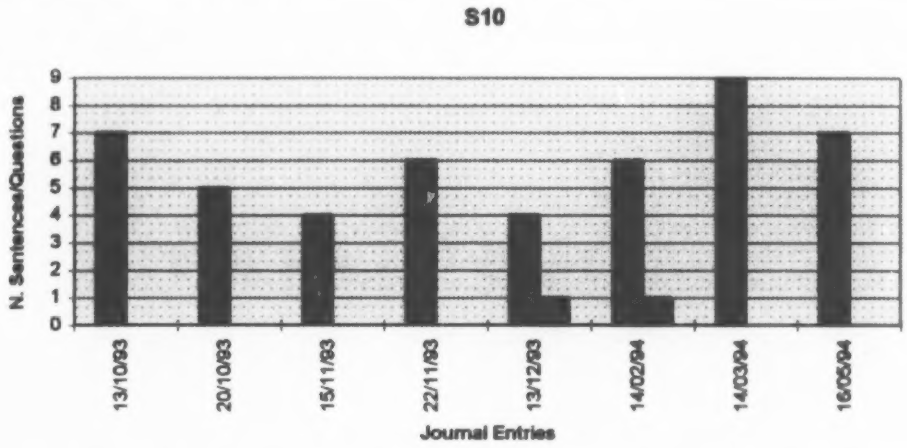
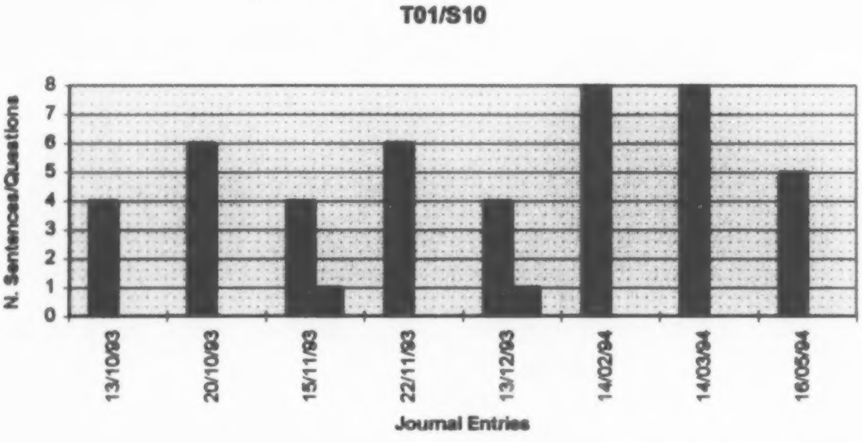

T01/S09

S10 Questions

Date	S10/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S10/Questions	T01/Questions	S10%	T01%
13/10/93	7	4			0%	0%
20/10/93	5	6			0%	0%
15/11/93	4	4		1	0%	25%
22/11/93	6	6			0%	0%
13/12/93	4	4	1	1	25%	25%
14/02/94	6	8	1		17%	0%
14/03/94	9	8			0%	0%
16/05/94	7	5			0%	0%
	48	45	2	2	4%	4%

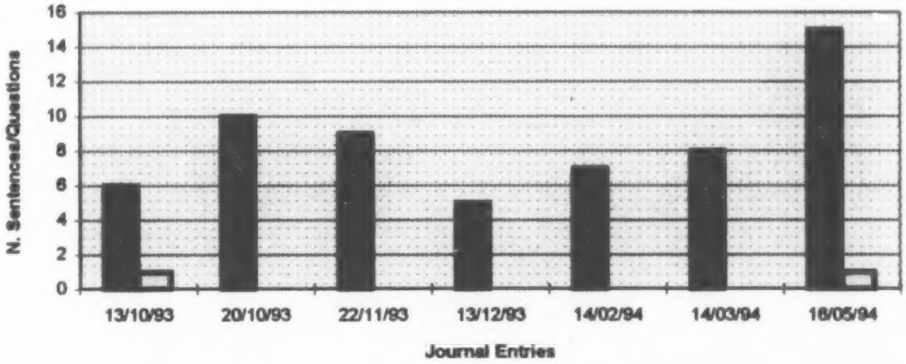




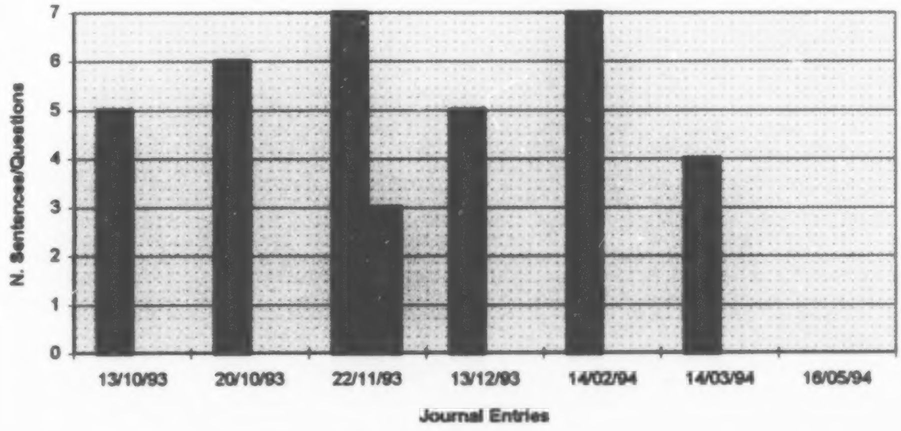
S11 Questions

Date	S11/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S11/Questions	T01/Questions	S07%	T01%
13/10/93	6	5	1		17%	0%
20/10/93	10	6			0%	0%
22/11/93	9	7		3	0%	43%
13/12/93	5	5			0%	0%
14/02/94	7	7			0%	0%
14/03/94	8	4			0%	0%
16/05/94	15	0	1		7%	0%
	60	34	2	3	3%	9%

S11

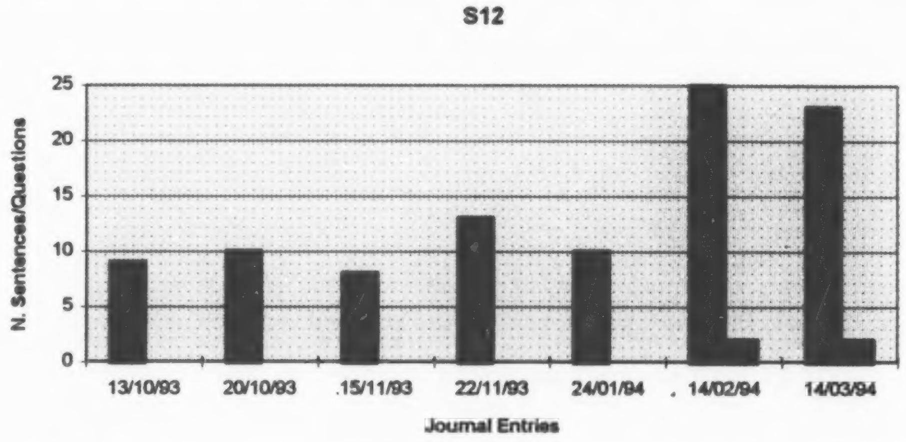


T01/S11



S12 Questions

Date	S12/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S12/Questions	T01/Questions	S12%	T01%
13/10/93	9	6		1	0%	17%
20/10/93	10	7		3	0%	43%
15/11/93	8	6		1	0%	17%
22/11/93	13	6			0%	0%
24/01/94	10	15		2	0%	13%
14/02/94	25	28	2	3	8%	11%
14/03/94	23	23	2		9%	0%
	98	91	4	10	4%	11%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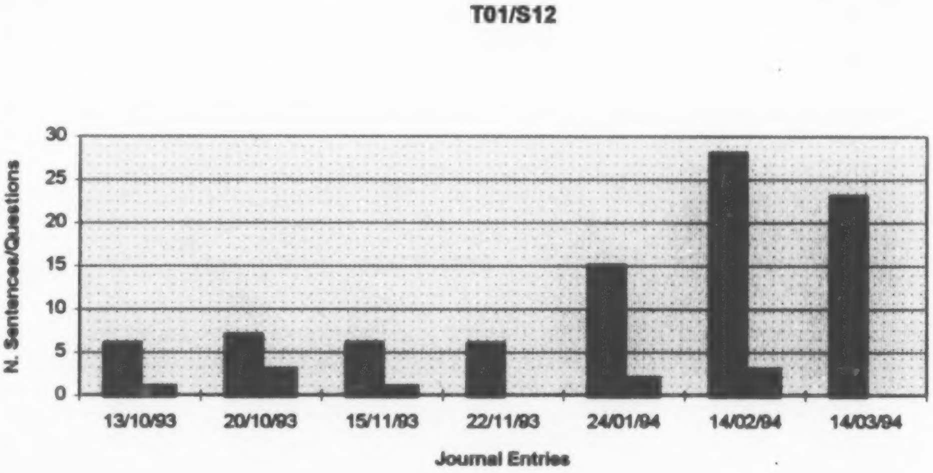
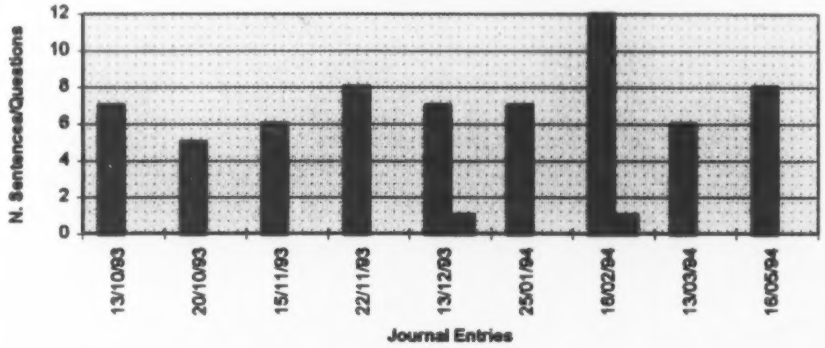

T01/S12

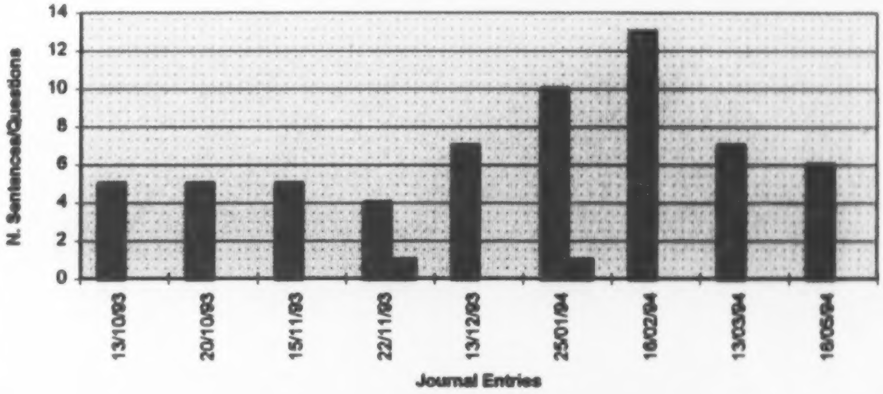
S14 Questions

Date	S14/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S14/Questions	T01/Questions	S14%	T01%
13/10/93	7	5			0%	0%
20/10/93	5	5			0%	0%
15/11/93	6	5			0%	0%
22/11/93	8	4		1	0%	25%
13/12/93	7	7	1		14%	0%
25/01/94	7	10		1	0%	10%
16/02/94	12	13	1		8%	0%
13/03/94	6	7			0%	0%
16/05/94	8	6			0%	0%
	66	62	2	2	3%	3%

S14

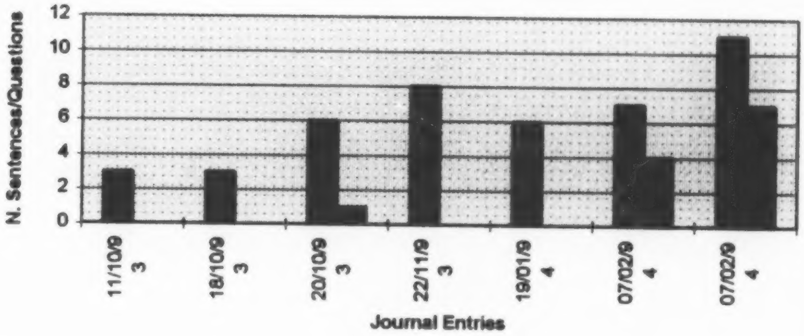


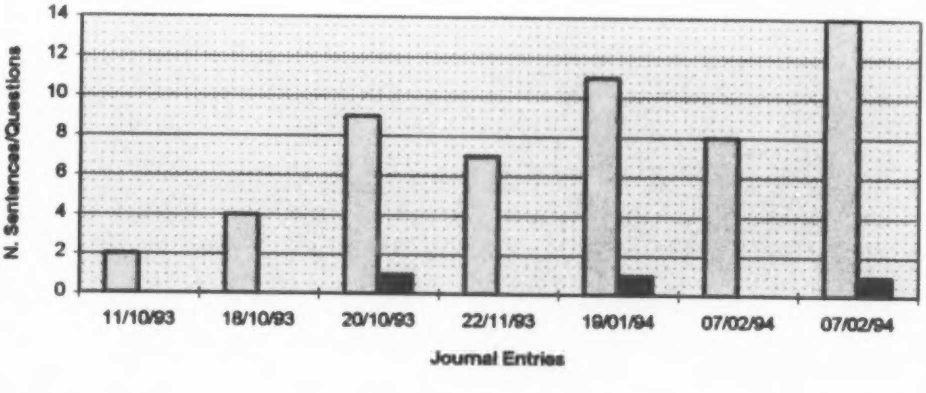
T01/S14



S15 Questions

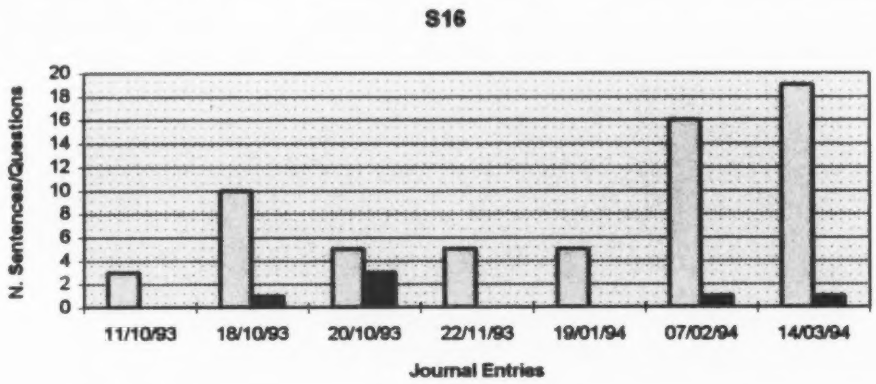
Date	S15/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S15/Questions	T01/Questions	S15%	T01%
11/10/93	3	2			0%	0%
18/10/93	3	4			0%	0%
20/10/93	6	9	1	1	17%	11%
22/11/93	8	7			0%	0%
19/01/94	6	11		1	0%	9%
07/02/94	7	8	4		57%	0%
07/02/94	11	14	7	1	64%	7%
	44	55	12	3	27%	5%

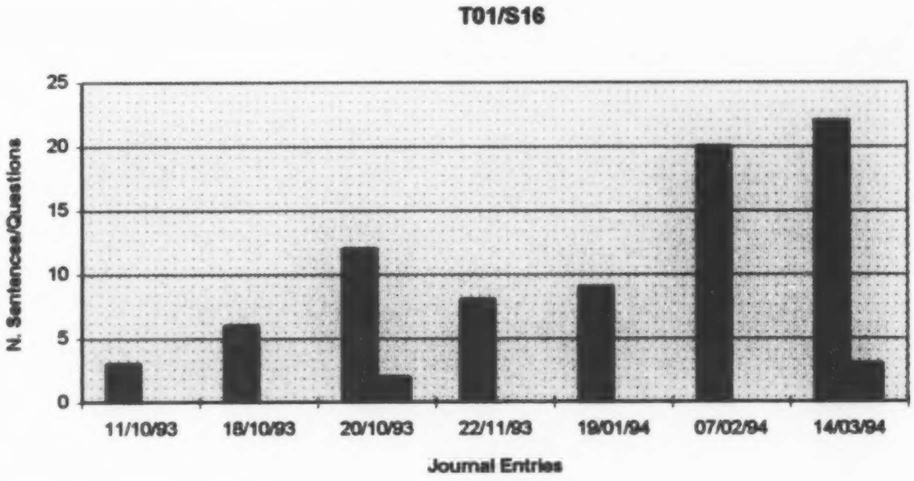

S15


T01/S15

S16 Questions

Date	S16/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S16/Questions	T01/Questions	S16%	T01%
11/10/93	3	3			0%	0%
18/10/93	10	6	1		10%	0%
20/10/93	5	12	3	2	60%	17%
22/11/93	5	8			0%	0%
19/01/94	5	9			0%	0%
07/02/94	16	20	1		6%	0%
14/03/94	19	22	1	3	5%	14%
	63	80	6	5	10%	6%

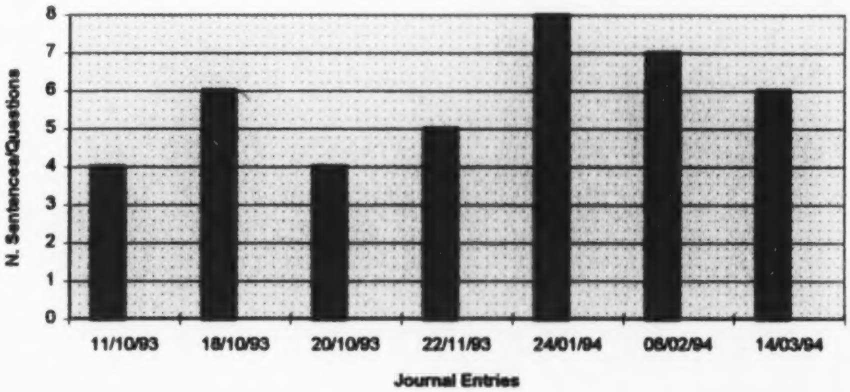




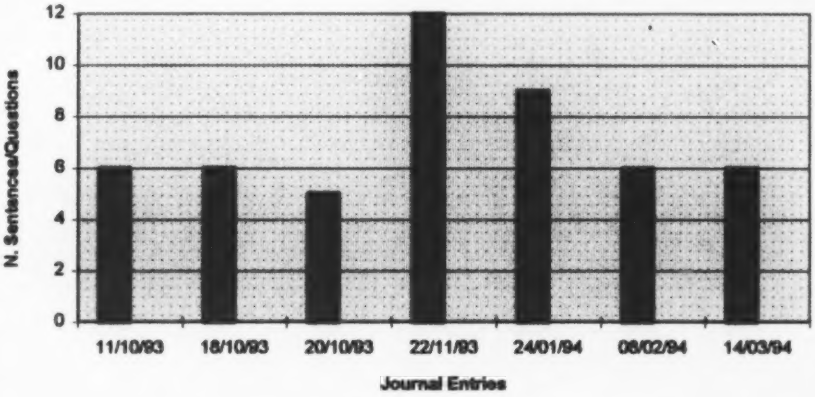
S17 Questions

Date	S17/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S17/Questions	T01/Questions	S17%	T01%
11/10/93	4	6			0%	0%
18/10/93	6	6			0%	0%
20/10/93	4	5			0%	0%
22/11/93	5	12			0%	0%
24/01/94	8	9			0%	0%
08/02/94	7	6			0%	0%
14/03/94	6	6			0%	0%
	40	50	0	0	0%	0%

S17

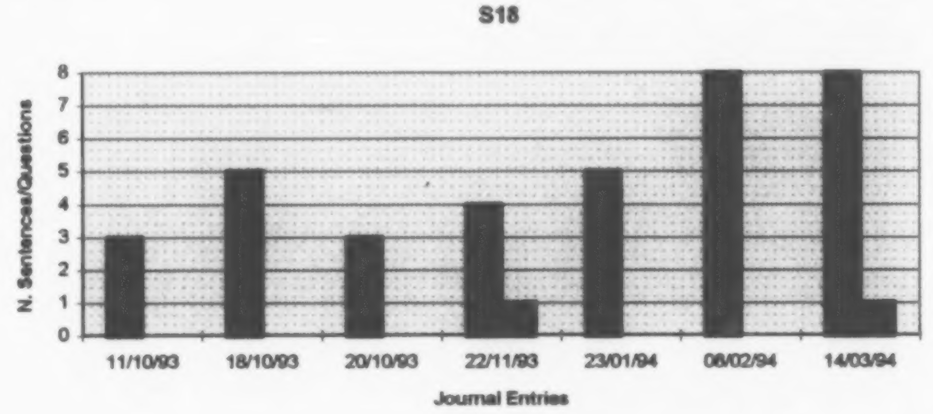


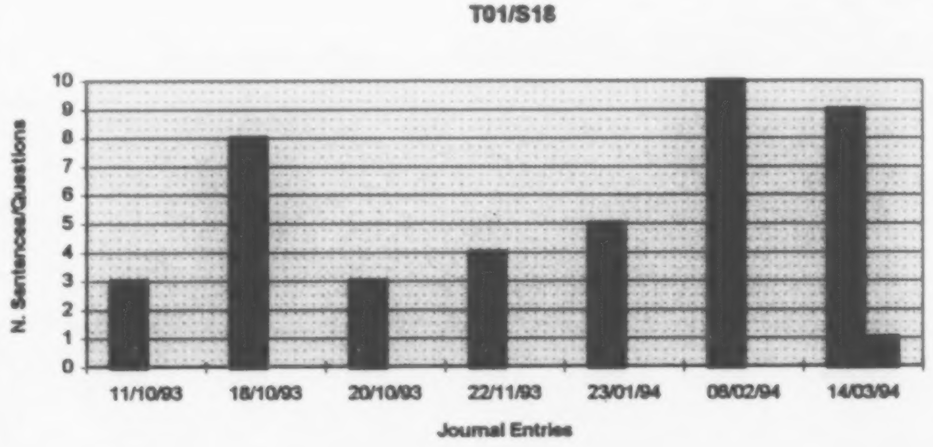
T01/S17



S18 Questions

Date	S18/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S18/Questions	T01/Questions	S18%	T01%
11/10/93	3	3			0%	0%
18/10/93	5	8			0%	0%
20/10/93	3	3			0%	0%
22/11/93	4	4	1		25%	0%
23/01/94	5	5			0%	0%
08/02/94	8	10			0%	0%
14/03/94	8	9	1	1	13%	11%
	36	42	2	1	6%	2%

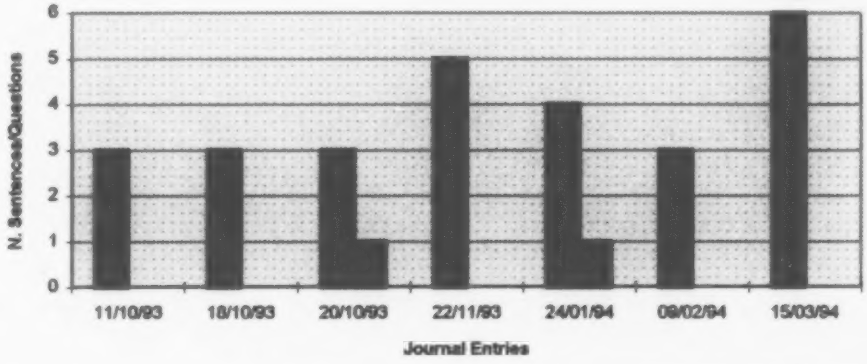




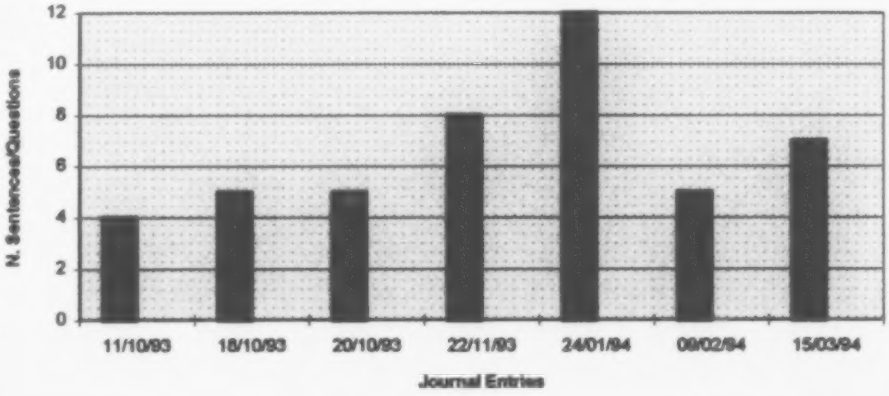
S19 Questions

Date	S19/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S19/Questions	T01/Questions	S19%	T01%
11/10/93	3	4			0%	0%
18/10/93	3	5			0%	0%
20/10/93	3	5	1		33%	0%
22/11/93	5	8			0%	0%
24/01/94	4	12	1		25%	0%
09/02/94	3	5			0%	0%
15/03/94	6	7			0%	0%
	27	46	2	0	7%	0%

S19



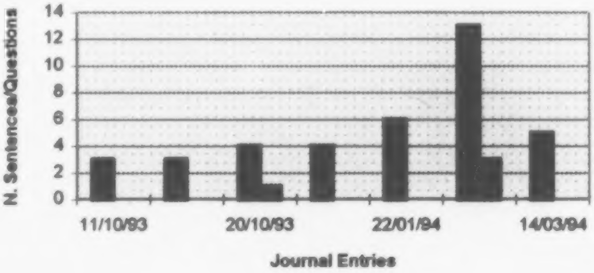
T01/S19



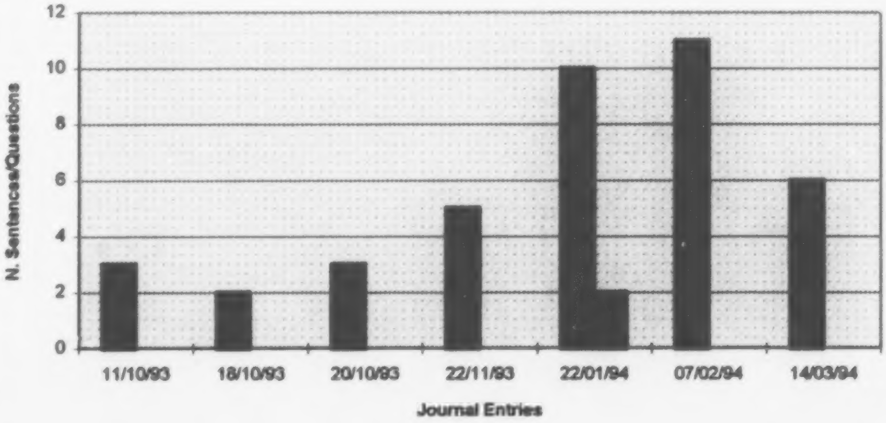
S21 Questions

Date	S21/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S21/Questions	T01/Questions	S21%	T01%
11/10/93	3	3			0%	0%
18/10/93	3	2			0%	0%
20/10/93	4	3	1		25%	0%
22/11/93	4	5			0%	0%
22/01/94	6	10		2	0%	20%
07/02/94	13	11	3		23%	0%
14/03/94	5	6			0%	0%
	38	40	4	2	11%	5%

S21

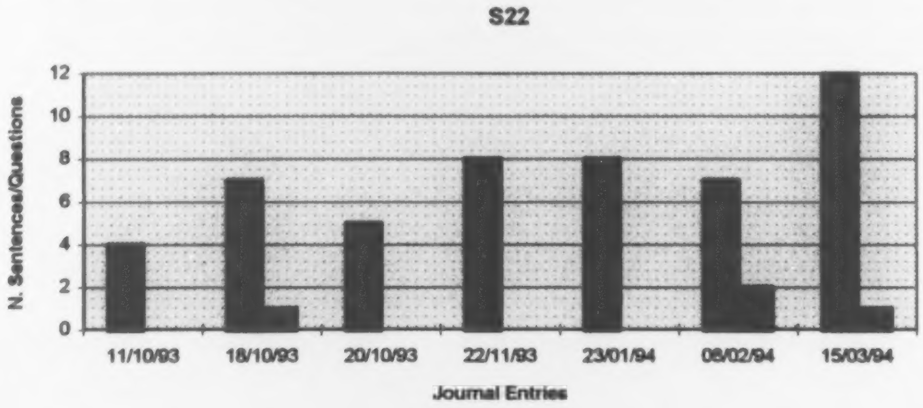


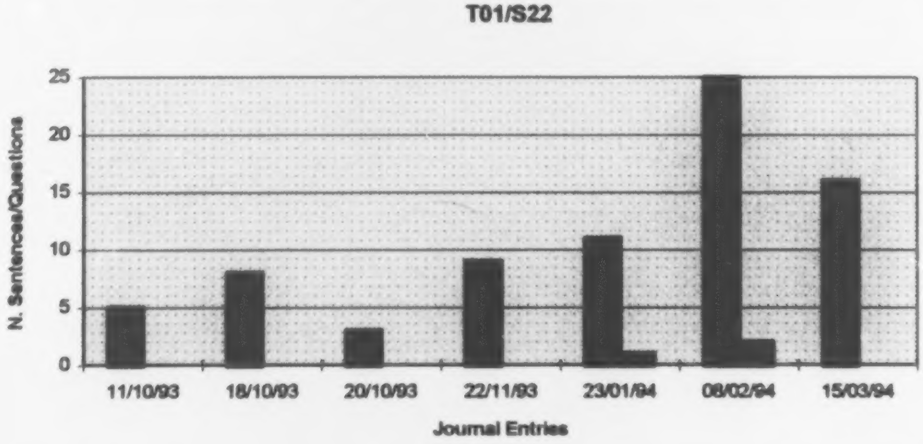
T01/S21



S22 Questions

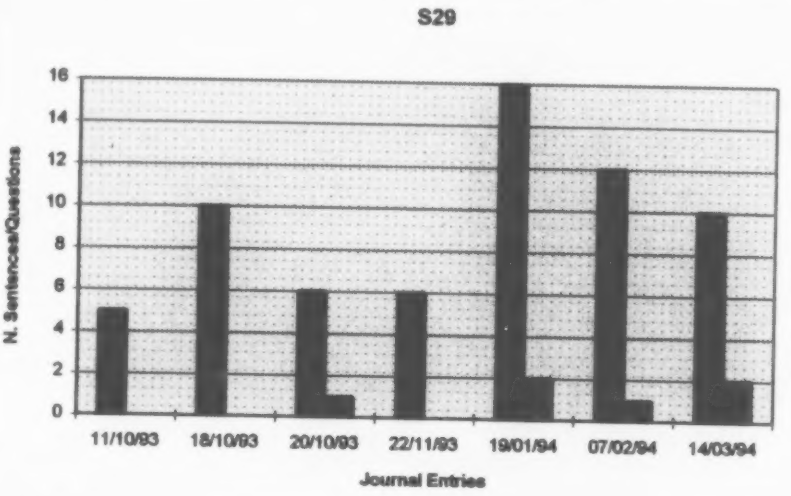
Date	S22/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S22/Questions	T01/Questions	S22%	T01%
11/10/93	4	5			0%	0%
18/10/93	7	8	1		14%	0%
20/10/93	5	3			0%	0%
22/11/93	8	9			0%	0%
23/01/94	8	11		1	0%	9%
08/02/94	7	25	2	2	29%	8%
15/03/94	12	16	1		8%	0%
	51	77	4	3	8%	4%

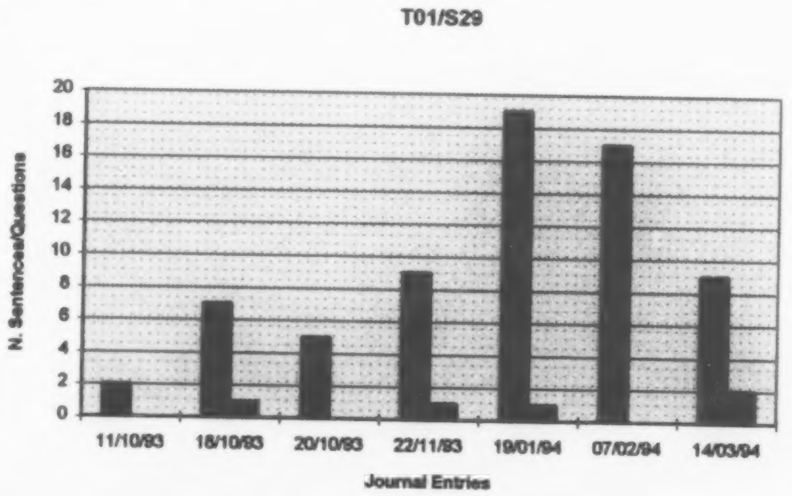




S29 Questions

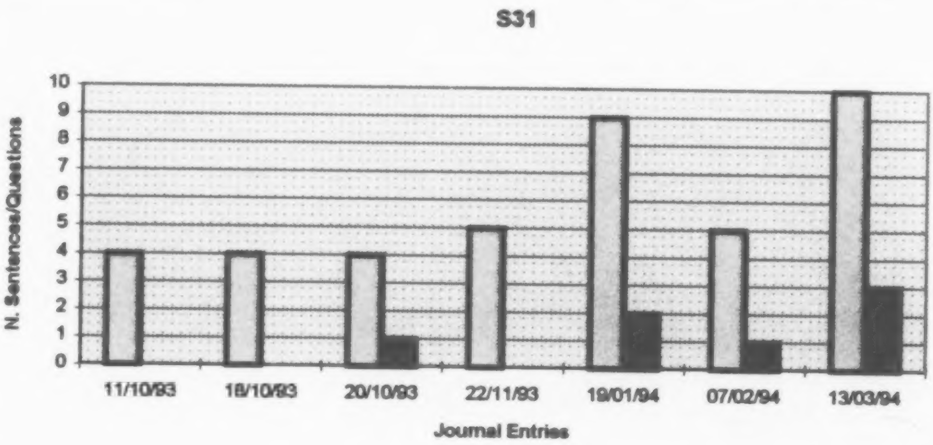
Date	S29/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S29/Questions	T01/Questions	S29%	T01%
11/10/93	5	2			0%	0%
18/10/93	10	7		1	0%	14%
20/10/93	6	5	1		17%	0%
22/11/93	6	9		1	0%	11%
19/01/94	16	19	2	1	13%	5%
07/02/94	12	17	1		8%	0%
14/03/94	10	9	2	2	20%	22%
	65	68	6	5	9%	7%

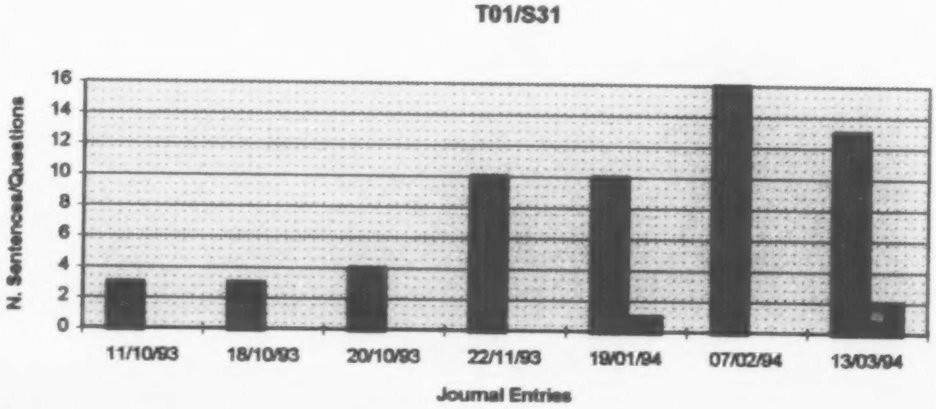




S31 Questions

Date	S31/Sentences	T01/Sentences	S31/Questions	T01/Questions	S31%	T01%
11/10/93	4	3			0%	0%
18/10/93	4	3			0%	0%
20/10/93	4	4	1		25%	0%
22/11/93	5	10			0%	0%
19/01/94	9	10	2	1	22%	10%
07/02/94	5	16	1		20%	0%
13/03/94	10	13	3	2	30%	15%
	41	59	7	3	17%	5%





Appendix: The Journals

<S01/13.10>

one thing I have learnd today <p> Learning is a very important think. It can help you to grow up. I think it is very important to learn by the misteakes. you can do new esperiances and new projects too.<p> Today I <A> have <a> learned only English grammar, but it is an extreamly important thing for my future. Learning is a difficoult thing to do too. there are <A> some <a> people, that don't want learn. they think, they know everything. <p> You can learn by your parents, by you friends, by enyone. Learning at school is a difficult thing, you can have a lot of problems. but Someone thinks, that learning at school is an elementary thing

<T01/13.10>

It is true that learning is a difficult process but rewarding, too. As you say, learning new things and having new experiences can make you a better person. No matter who you learn from, the important thing is to learn something new. Some people do think they already know everything but they are wrong. You never know everything, it's practically impossible! I think that school is important because if the teachers like their jobs and if the students are willing to learn, well from mutual understanding and collaboration everybody will improve and get better.

<S01/20.10>

One thing I've learnt today. <p> Today I've learnt, that the life is very important, and you must not sprecarla. <p> the life is the biggest present that you can recive, butt somebody doesn't la apprezzano, and they la buttano via. <p> Butt When they have understanded, that the life is very important, it is too late, and they will not have another oportunity. You must learn to live the life in the correct sense. You must not burn le tappe immediately, if you wait the exatly moment, your life will be better, and you can understand the really scopo from your experience. <p> the life is yours, and nobody can condizionartela, you must think with your head, only in this modo, couden't have rimpianti.

<T01/20.10>

It is true that life is very precious and people should not waste it. Of course, you can't expect everybody to appreciate life the way it should be appreciated but I think you are too pessimistic about it. People are given a lot of opportunities to improve their lives not just one! What do you think? It's through experience that people learn how to behave properly. Only in this way you you can improve - that is by making mistakes!

<S01/15.11>

one thing <A> I <a> am happy/sad about <p> In this moment of my life, I am very happy, because I won't make the trip to Barcellona. I will stay at home for all the week, and I want me to relax. I can sleep in the morning, and can study with quite. I can orgagnized my day, in the afternoon I can go shopping ~~,~~ and study in the late morning. I think <A> that <a> Barcellona is a beautiful city, but I am not intresting in it, and I don't study spanish too. It will be for me, as another litte vacation. but sopratutto on this vacation I want sleep, and relax me. I can watch televion for long.

<T01/15.11>

Well, what you are saying sounds really good: an entire week to rest and relax, plenty of time to hang around and some time to study too. It is however a pity you did not join your friends because I know you kids usually love being together day and night away from your families. And even if you were not interested in visiting Barcelona (it may actually turn out to be interesting to go to places all the same) you could have amused yourself a lot. As your wish, from what I understand, is to sleep long hours I hope you succeeded in this!

<S01/22.11>

What I did last week? <p> Last week I was on a little holiday. I did only the homework for Monday and Thursday. In the morning I slept intil 10 o'clock. In the afternoon I went shopping, or went out with my friends. I watched the television and listened to the radio. I read books and magazines a lot. I cleaned my badroom. In the evening I met my friends, or my cousines. I helped my mother to clean the House, and to cook. <p> I relaxed myself very much. I didn't think about ~~anything~~ something. I went shopping with my gramnother too. Sometimes in the late afternoon I played with my little sister.

<T01/22.11>

Well, your little holiday, as you call it, must have been really relaxing! Rest, friends and happy moments, that's exactly what you need when you are worn out. Going shopping is a lot of fun but what did you buy? You sound like you went shopping every day! Did you really buy things or did you just go window-shopping? Do you know this expression? I like to go shopping with my mother or my grandmother too because they usually pay for me! That's clever! Isn't it?

<S01/13.12>

What I think about my test? <p> My test was not a sucsess, I have only give 6=, butt I am happy, because the test was difficoult, we had to do a lot of verbs and sentecens, and I have improved my grammar english. Butt the nex time I think, I can recive a batter note if I study much. the test was difficoult butt not impossible, we have <A> enough <a> time to do it ~~,~~ butt at the end of the 2 hours I had an hadaeake, and I was very tired. I think, I can do better.

<T01/13.12>

As I told you the other day I was very happy when I corrected your test because I think you have understood the underlying mechanism of the English language. Don't give up, Laura! Work hard and you'll make it. Study more and you will be more satisfied and gratified. The test was difficult indeed but I'm afraid so will be the tests to come. <p> Don't be discouraged and have confidence in yourself and don't worry about the headache you got and will get after the test!

<S01/24.01>

Last Christmas I stayed at home with my family. I didn't go away. <p> I enjoed my-self very much, and I hate too much. <p> We were 10, and we spoke about ~~all~~ eerything. <p> that night, if I don't remember well, it snowed a little, and I like the snow far Christmas very much. Butt the day later I was ill, and I hadn't got a good holiday. I have been ill far oll the time. <p> I didn't go to the schoolparty, and to the party far the ultimo dell'anno.

<T01/24.01>

I like snow very much, too. I think that it snowed on the night of the 26th of December but I might be wrong. I'm sorry to hear that you didn't have a pleasant Christmas holiday but at least you relaxed (though forced in bed or in the house). It does not surprise me you did not go to the school party because it seems to me that you don't like to take part in activities together with your school-mates. Why? Am I wrong? Anyway, I didn't do anything at all on New Year's Eve. People do not necessarily do something because it's the last day of the year!

<S01/14.02>

I like to take part in activities toghether my school mates. <p> I did not go to the school party, because I was ill, in fact I paied the ticket for the party. <p> Last year I ~~go~~ went to New York with the school, butt not this year because I was busy. <p> the school organized in Januuar or December a schooltrip to Ferrara. I was very happy to go there, and we were only 6 of my class. Monday's afternoon I went with my class to a classical ballet. Butt some of my mats stayed at home.

<T01/14.02>

Well, I'm glad to hear that you enjoy your school-friends' company and that you don't mind doing things together with them at all. It is extremely important to feel part of a group of people and to plan activities with those who share our experiences with us. <p> I know that not many people went to the theatre to see the ballet; maybe very few people were really interested. But I think that one should try to do as many activities as possible and have as many interests as possible. It is always nice to feel busy and active.

<S01/10.03>

Last month I begun to play aerobic, because I am too fat. the first time it was very difficoult for me did the same things, that did my mates. I always ~~ret~~ came home very tired, butt I liked it, and it wasn't a problem. <p> Aerobic is very amuosing. <???> <A> I <a> knew a lot of people, and I enjoy myself very much. <p> I play aerobic twice a week, from 6 to 7, I weight less, and I am happy.

<T01/10.03>

Aerobics is very good both for the body and the mind. I wanted to sign up for a course too but then gave up because of time problems. I am happy you like it! It is certainly good exercise, though I don't think that you are as fat as you picture yourself. <p> Do it because it is amusing and because music plus movement help you release some tension. It also must feel good to be with people who are not directly involved in your daily problems, I mean routine school problems, so have a nice time!

<S01/16.05>

Journal <p> It is the end of the school year, and I would like you to tell you that this one was the strongest and the more difficult I have ever made. <p> Because we had a lot of new sujects, as chemistry, and a lot of new teachers. <p> We had 4 school maths too, but this was only a good thing for us, because last year we were only 10. <p> This year for me was very difficult, because I had difficulties with subjets I have never had. But it doesn't matter, the importance of life is not the school, even if is a big parth, I consider more important friends. <p> I am very happy that we are at the end of the school year, because for a month I can relax me, and than study again.

<T01/16.05>

School is an important experience in a person's life but, of course, it would be wrong (and it is wrong) to measure life against school. You don't have to get depressed or frustrated just because you are having some difficulties in a few subjects! Try to do your best, forget about the rest! I am happy to hear that the four new classmates are loved by everybody in the class. Good! Well, I hope I'll be able to get some rest too because I am as worn out as you are!

<S02/13.10>

<WU> One thing I have learned today <wu> <p>Today we have finished to read and to examine the text of Linda McCartney. <p> It's very beautiful know what a famous people does in an ordinary day, what are his/her habits and about her/his family and

work. <p> We have learned a little which are the most important parts in a text. <p> I like very much this type of work. <p> Then we have talked about an other famous person Willi Hoffman. He is a busy man, he works a lot, and he needs very little sleep. He has a good volontà.

<T01/13.10>

It's indeed interesting to know how a famous person like Linda spends her day. Well, I do think that actors and singers, all these famous people, live pretty much the same life as we ordinary people do. They do have more money maybe but as far as feelings and emotions are concerned they are human beings like us, flesh and blood. I'm happy to hear that you like what we are doing in class very much. Willi Hoffman is another famous person but he is involved in politics, which is a very complicated science. You really need a lot of devotion and determination if you want to be successful!

<S02/20.10>

Today we have seen a report, which is been very (toccante) <p> It's about the separation of Siamese twins. <p> It's very difficult to think about two little children who are in that <A> serious <a> situation and also at their parents. <p> I think that situation put people strongly alla prova <p> This type of activity is very usefull //utile// but a little difficult. <p> But I like it very much. I never do it before and I think it is very interesting.

<T01/20.10>

The story of the two siamese twins is really very touching and moving. I'm sure that the babies' parents went through a very depressing period especially because the outcome of the operation was not certain to be successful. I'm really happy you like this activity. I think it is very useful as Students need to be exposed to real oral communication activities. You probably found it difficult because you had never done something like that.

<S02/22.11>

What I did last week? <p> Last week I went to Hong Kong with Chantal, Alice and someone from the 1st class. <p> I enjoyed myself a lot. <p> Hong Kong is very different from Italy. It was a wonderful experience, because I could see a lot of places and things that in Italy there aren't. <p> Life is very caotica and people are not interesting on the other person, they are sgarbati. <p> Hong Kong is full of skyscrapers. Some are very beautiful the other are dirty. We could see the different from rich and poor.

<T01/22.11>

Of course we can't have the same things and places here in Europe because our history has been completely different and therefore culture is different as well. It is interesting though to have the opportunity to compare countries and ways of life. <p> One possible reason why people in Hong Kong are not interested in socializing with tourists is probably that they are too busy selling things. Their only interest is probably money.

<S02/13.12>

MY OPINION ABOUT MY TEXT <p> I think it is my worst text in my life. <p> I was very restless and so I couldn't concentrate. <p> Before the text I had been at home for a week. I have studied a lot but I think that I have done a lot mistakes. <p> I think that text was difficult and so I begun to restless and I didn't remember what I have studied.

<T01/13.12>

Tests always upset students. You should not worry too much however because a test is not to be considered as <U> the <u> final judgement on the person, on the students' personalities. A test is merely an assessment of how much a student has learned or still has to learn. You know perfectly why you failed the test. Have confidence in yourself work hard and you'll be happier next time. It takes time to improve and learn new things. But my question is: "Why shouldn't you make it?" Tell me what you don't understand or what is still unclear. Sometimes, I get mad and yell but don't worry I'm just crazy but willing to help. And next time don't feel so nervous and don't be so tense!

<S02/24.01>

One thing I will never do again <p> A long time ago I went to skii with my friends. <p> I had skiied only once and so I was not very good and expert. But when you are with friends how can you say no I can't, I have fear and so on? <p> So my friends took me to a red (pista). They told me they stayed with me all the time and they halped me. <p> I went with a bit of fear but I knew that I had enjoyed myself. <p> Two of my friends stayed with me and together arrived, after many falls, at the end. <p> I was at the same time happy but also frightend because it was such a terrible (pista.) Perhaps I has been incoscente and when I think about all this I belive to be a little bit stiupid.

<T01/24.01>

It may sound funny: I like snow very much but I don't like skiing. I never go skiing actually. I've tried though, and that was a long time ago but I'm afraid of falling and breaking my head! Well, a leg or arm would be enough! I guess red slopes are the difficult ones, but, see, when I went skiing more than 10 years ago I don't remember what slope I tried to cope with. All I know is that I went up by ski-lift and came down carrying the skis on my back. If you had a good time don't think about it any more. Next time you go skiing just think of how frightened you felt when you were sliding down the red slope and try a different one.

<S02/16.02>

When I meet a person the first thing that catches my attention is his or her physical appearance. I thing it's normal to make an opinion about the other but it's important not to criticize this person, basing the opinion only on his or her physical appearance. Perhaps this can't sound very well because people usually think that the most important thing is personality and appearance is the last one. I believe that it's true. but you are inclined to know a person if you like, for example, his or her way of speaking and clothes. <p> What I like most in people, in their personality, is the sincerity and their (stato d'animo) <A+PE> wood <a+pe>. I like people who are often happy, optimistic and that they are able to make you happy in a simple way. When you are with this person your problems disappear and all seems different and interesting. They help you to cope with difficult situations. <p> What I dislike most in people is when they haven't a strong personality. They have an opinion but when you say something they immidiately agree with you. Another thing I don't like is the enwy and when they make a fool of yourself.

<T01/16.02>

I think that physical appearance is what strikes us the most when we first meet somebody. But of course, it would be too naive to judge people by their looks! I agree with you when you say that it is important to go beyond people's appearance and discover and maybe appreciate their personality, temperament and feelings. <p> There are people you don't like at first sight but when you get to know them better you feel as if you had discovered a completely different world. People you thought as being ugly and obnoxious become beautiful and deserving. <p> It's necessary to know people really well before forming an opinion on them. On the other hand, we feel attracted to someone looking nice and wearing great clothes but what about if this person is fake and empty inside? <p> You yourself deprecate lack of sincerity and envy. So it's better to know someone really well before considering him/her as our friend.

<S02/14.03>

In this period I think a lot about our school system because I have found a lot of problems and diseases. <p> I was used to face my daily school life with serenity and gaiety but now I'm often worried and nervous. <p> This school is very different from the other that I have attended for the first two years of gymnasium. <p> We were a little family, the relationship between teachers and students was very good, we spoke about everythink without any problems and we knew that we could be helped both psychologically and in the school subjects. <p> I don't want to criticize this school but I think that in the class there is too much competition for the best notes, there isn't a strong friendship: everybody thinks only to himself and I note that there is no real co<A>m<a>munication <p> I suppose that we, young people, are not guilty for this but this type of institution that doesn't give you the opportunity to help the others and aboveall to think about the others problems.

<T01/14.03>

Annalisa, I hope my words will be of some comfort to you. But you must consider things and situations as impartially as you can. In all fairness, I understand your anger and disappointment but let me tell you what I think. <p> First of all, this year is particularly tough for you because you've been working on a very hard syllabus. You must recognize that what you did during the first two years of high school was not enough to face the real world of a language. <p> Of course, it takes time to catch up and you are now tired for having put so much of yourself into it. No wonder you are exhausted! But the school year is going to be over soon and you will have plenty of time to recover and to finally make all the concepts and rules discussed together your own. <p> As to the relationship between students and teachers, I regret to have to tell you that I'm used to having a better rapport with my students. <p> However, it is extremely difficult for me to cope with people who fear you and who are convinced that you are an enemy to fight and defeat. <p> I am not saying that we teachers are perfect, I am just saying that I do not feel any efforts from your part (from you students, I mean) to open up and be collaborative. <p> This journal is the evidence that as far as I am concerned, I'm trying to involve you in a different type of relationship. I like people willing to discuss different opinions openly and support their points of view freely and sincerely. I am by no means a discriminating person and accept any kind of confrontation. I thank you for being sincere with me in this journal. I would like to talk to you personally because I have the impression that there has been some misunderstanding. Just do not think that a teacher is someone distributing grades around the class!

<S02/16.05>

It is the end of the school year and I would like to tell you that this period, in all sincerity, has been very hard and difficult for me because I have had to change the rhythm of my life: wake up very early in the morning, take two different trains, arrive at home in the afternoon later, (trascurare) my friends and so on. <p> I have had to (adeguarmi) to a new school reality: new class-mates, new teachers and therefore new (programmi) and methods of work. <p> Now I have realized that this "painful" experience doesn't have only negative sides, but it has also taught me a lot. <p> Although I have had some moments of (amarezza) and some afflictions, I have learnt that I don't have to (arrendermi), I have understood that I have and want to study for my future and not only to please my family of to get good notes. <p> Biside the fact, that I have had to cope with a lot of changes and difficulties, has contributed in my opinion to my personal growth and I think that this is really very important. <p> It's strange to think that the year, which seemed to me so long and tiring only some months ago, is over and the school holidays are near. <p> It has been difficult but I know that next year it will be simpler, I really hope so.

<T01/16.05>

Annalisa, I am very happy with your personal understanding of facts. <p> I hope what you are saying is what you really think about the situation. I know it is hard to adjust to a hectic pace of life and probably in order to "catch up" you have had to give up a lot of yourself too! <p> Going through disappointing and bitter experiences is nothing to be ashamed of. On the contrary, these test your strength and determination and it is exactly when you understand that you don't want to give up, no matter what happens, that you can really say to be reaching your goals. I'm sure next year will not be as tough as this past year and above all I would like to congratulate you on your discovery: always do things because you think it right for you and not just because other people want you to do so.

<S03/13.10>

1 Thing I have learnd Today <p> I would like to learn American English very well; my new English teacher has learnt us a lot of American exprecstion today and I'm very happy about it. <p> Unfortunately American English has too many words and I think it is a difficult language but really nice.

<T01/13.10>

It's true. American English is very rich in colloquial expressions, different words (compared to British English) but it's nice to learn alternative things. That's why I want to teach you American English, too. Movies and songs are full of expressions and words used in the States and as the US is one of the most powerful countries in the world I feel you ought to know some America English. Unfortunately it has a difficult pronunciation.

<S03/20.10>

<U> One thing I have learnt today <u> <p> Today we watched an American report about the separation of siamese twins. It was really interesting. I understood the language not very much, because it was quickly but I do think I want to learn that language well. I'd like to go to Minnesota (where the operation was carried out) and live in that place for a long time.

<T01/20.10>

Why Minnesota? I think there are other States you could go to. Well, it's a beautiful State but it's too cold during the winter time. The temperature drops below zero! The report was kind of fast, everybody was speaking very fast. <p> Even if you didn't understand believe me it's a good exercise to try to figure out what people are saying in a different language. That's the most amusing part I think. It's a sort of challenge. Try to understand more next time and tell me how it's going.

<S03/15.11>

One thing I am happy/sad about. <p> I'm very happy because tomorrow I'm leaving to Barcellona. ~~it's a school tryp and I~~ I'm going there with my school and I hope to know my schoolmates and my teachers better than now. I also want to visit Barcellona and eat typical Spanish food. Unfortunately I don't know anything about the Spain and Spanish language, but I'd like to learn more about that.

<T01/15.11>

It is always exciting to leave for a new destination, especially if you go with friends and the company is good. I have never been to Spain (except for the Canary Islands) and therefore know very little about Spain and Spanish. The Spanish language is similar to Italian so you shouldn't find it difficult to talk and to communicate. I do know something about the food: my favourite

Spanish specialty is undoubtedly "paella" a typical dish I hope you have a chance of trying.

<S03/22.11>

What I did last week. <p> Last week I went to Barcellona, I was on a school trip and the company was good. our teachers were very nice, at night they went to bed very early and we could talk all together all night long. In the morning we were really tired, we had some bags under our eyes. <p> In this trip I could have known <A> better <a> my schoolmate and apprezzare o detestare il loro carattere.

<T01/22.11>

School trips are educational not only because you visit places and get in touch with different cultures but also because you can get to know your classmates better. Of course, by spending so much time together you are "unveiled" positive and negative behaviours and habits. On the subject of night talks and discussions, what you get the next morning because of tiredness is circles under your eyes and not bags! Those are used to go grocery shopping.

<S03/13.12>

my opinion about my texst. <p> My test isn't good because I have made lots of mistakes. I haven't understood them yet. I hope to have more luck next time. I had studied for this text but not enough

<T01/13.12>

If you want to improve, my suggestion is as follows: study more and try to understand the rules governing the sentences and the structure of the sentence. You can't just rely on luck. That doesn't help much. Study!!!

<S03/24.01>

<U> My school <u> <p> My school is very difficut and we have ~~every day~~ to study very much. <p> It's usually impossible to prepare all the subjects and our teachers are <U> severi <u> with us. <p> I'd like to improve my Englisch and the others subjects, but I think it's really tough.

<T01/24.01>

Cecilia, I don't really know what to say. You've been telling me that you want to improve and learn English since the beginning of the year, I mean school year, but you have done very little in reality. I already told you in my last journal that you must study more and get somebody to help you with your homework. Also, take part in our classes, don't talk as you usually do. I have the impression that you have been quieter lately, which is good. I hope I'm not wrong.

<S03/14.02>

I would like to speak about Music. we don't realize that all Music is so importan n our life. we can hear it everywhere: on the T.V., on the radio or in a Film. It's really important because a world without Music would be sad!!! I love all Music very much because I can express myself with a particular song whereas it can be difficult with some words. <p> A song <A> also <a> can help us to live again a great moment in the past.

<T01/14.02>

It is true, music is very beautiful and important too. I agree with you: a world without music would be a sad and dull one. I like all sorts of music but my favourite is classical music. When I listen to it, I understand that it is almost impossible to comprehend the beauty and power this kind of music contains. You are taken far-away because the mind is finally free to wander about and what is great about music is that it develops in you an all-powerful sort of feeling which makes you perceive the world in a different way.

<S03/16.05>

It's the end of school year and I would say that: <p> this ~~year ha~~ school year has been really taugh, because I met lots of new subjects, which are very difficult and also the subjects, that I have just studied, are extremly ~~difficult~~ demanding. <p> This year I have also met some new schoolmate, who are really great and nice. <p> I think, they are joined the class last year, infact, we were extremly divided; there were some group in the class.

<T01/16.05>

Well, I'm happy to know that, after all, this has not been a totally unfortunate year. It is nice to hear that the class now feels like everybody is part of a group. This is extremely important when you have to share the best years of your life with people you have not chosen yourself. I hope that this growing experience will be a characterizing feature next year as well.

<S04/13.10>

ONE THING I HAVE LEARN TODAY <p> Today we have learn same grammar things, I don't like them but sometimes I have to ~~do~~ learn them, I like more to read some articols and today we read ones about a singer who have a very good family and a very nice wife, they have a big house but they live in a one flat and I don't understand that. We have learnt some american exprections and I think it's good because last year I had a teacher who ~~teach~~ taught only about english. Now I ~~must~~ <A> 'm <a> writing some things but I don't know what I can write about theose two hours.

<T01/13.10>

Well, I'm glad you like American English. I think that teachers of English should teach both languages when possible. There're a lot of interesting expressions in American English and since movies and songs are full of colloquial expressions I feel you ought to know as much as you can learn. I like to analyse articles, too but in order for you to understand their underlying structures you must learn some grammar as well. And don't get depressed but what you have learnt so far is just a little something compared to what you'll learn in the future.

<S04/20.10>

ONE THING I HAVE LEARN TODAY <p> Today we have learn about some grammar and then we have seen a reported about a surgeory. This surgeory had to sove two siamese twins. The surgeory have finished good and the two twins are save. I have faund this reported quit difficult, and I haven't understood some things, but I m happy because same time ego I didn't understand nothing when an english person ~~speaks~~ spoke.

<T01/20.10>

The report we saw last week was indeed interesting not just because a lot of children are born that way but also and for our purpose because students are exposed to the use of the real language. I know it was quite difficult but if we do things you already know you'll never improve. What you have learned so far is just a little something of what you will learn in the future. (Why am I repeating myself?)

<S04/15.11>

ONE THING I'M HAPPY OR SAD ABOUT <p> One thing that make me feel sad is the Monday morning when I wake up and there is a week of school to do this is a nightmare for me but on Tuesday is just better. Now I don't feel very unhappy because tomorrow I ~~g~~ m going to Barcel~~l~~ona and this thing make me feel happy. <p> Normally I feel happy just on Saturday when I think at a aftenoon with my friends when I go to some pubs or sometime to the disco and when I think ~~to at~~ about a Sunday in completly relax. I m also happy when I go to the palazzo dello sport in Modena to see my favaurite players of volleyball.

<T01/15.11>

I'm sorry your perception of school hours is comparable to a nightmare. The time spent in class must be endlessly boring for you! I don't think I could take it! I usually had a lot of fun at school probably because I liked studying. So, even if you don't like studying my suggestion is that you find a good reason for attending the lessons. Think of your future, get ready to tackle with it because work can be worse.

<S04/22.11>

WHAT I DID LAST WEEK <p> Last week I went to Barcelona with my schoolfriends. It was a wanderful trip, I saw many art gallery and museum but I also saw many other parts of the city, Barcelona is a very big city ~~but~~ with many place to see ~~but~~ but there is too much pollution and it is like ~~Milano~~ Milano or Rome. I saw the places where last year the olipics ~~were~~ took place and we walked too much. The problem is that I ~~haven't slep~~ didn't sleep but I had a lot of fun with ~~Nicola~~ my friends but ~~the~~ there was an ather problem in fact there were some incomprensioni with other my friends.

<T01/22.11>

I've never been to Barcelona. I've been told that it's a nice city, very modern and strange at least from an architectural point of view. I know that students don't sleep much during these trips. In fact, this was the first time I was not available to take students away. The important thing is that you had fun (apart from a few misunderstandings), and if you did not have enough sleep you'll catch up with it now that you are back.

<S04/13.12>

WHAT I THINK ABOUT MY TEST <p> My test isn't <A> very <a> good and it' ~~is~~ isn't very bad, it's a test a normal test. The teacher says that I ~~m~~ <A> was <a> not concentrated but I don't know. Maiby it's trŏw, maiby I haven't studyed very much. I hope to improve my english!

<T01/13.12>

I would bet anything! It is true you could have studied more. But I think you are mature enough (at least, you should be) to know what you want and what you don't want. I say you should study more and be quiet and more collaborative in class. But you decide for yourself! And learn the proverb "to escape by the skin of one's teeth" because that's what has happened to you!

<S05/13.10>

<U> One think I have learnd today <u> <p> Today I have learnd only English, because my schoolfriends and I am going to visite Miro's mostra from 10 to 12.50 o'clock. <p> But the English lesson was interisting and important <A> for me <a> because I have understood a lot of grammar regulars, tought they weren't new for me and perhaps for my friends, too. <p> ~~the piece of the our teacher~~ The our teacher's piece of the journal was very interisting, perhaps. I like reading these paragraphs.

<T01/13.10>

Yes, the only classes you had today were my English classes because you visited the exhibition organized in our city in honour of Mirò. I'm glad you are enjoying our reading of articles. It is important to analyse how newspaper articles are structured and how paragraphs are written and I'm sure you'll improve a lot and learn more rules. You might not find all the articles interesting for you but I'll try to do my best to find subjects of interest for you teen-agers.

<S05/20.10>

<U> One think I have learnd today <u> <p> Today I'm very enjoying my self wachting an <A> CNN <a> interview about the separation of siamese Twins <A> because <a> this is a very important problem, that everyone must be think about. The discuss about what are you like <A> during the 2-hour lesson <a> for exemple, was interisting, too. This exprecion is different of italian and it's important that teachers teach that, because Italian students might be wrong.

<T01/20.10>

There are a lot of expressions which are different from what we would say in Italian. It is therefore necessary to learn these expressions to avoid possible misunderstandings. Apart from the siamese twins there are so many other serious problems people should be thinking about! But nowadays it's getting more and more difficult to spare time for other people's problems because we don't even have time for ourselves.

<S05/15.11>

<U> One thing I'm happy or sad about <u> In this moment I'm happy, because tomorrow I'll go to Barcellona with my schoolfriends on holiday. That'll allow us to stop our stress and to get distance from schoolday. <p> of course we'll enjoy ourselveses <A> abroad <a> very much, That why we'll stay together, even if we'll must to visit a lot of museums. <p> We'll know lots interesting things, but we'll stay in only 5 days and not a week as in New York. But I know (that) we'll enjoy ourselves very much.

<T01/15.11>

A vacation really helps people to relax, to have a "break" and get some distance from tight & busy schedules. But I assume that after the schooltrip everybody will be full of energy and eager to study! That's why I wanted the class to read the article about the importance of a vacation before the trip. As to museums, I think they are very interesting places to visit but probably young people find them extremely boring. I'm sure you'll have enjoyed yourselves a lot and that once back to normal life you'll regret the happy moments in Barcelona though short the stay might have seemed.

<S05/22.11>

<U> What I did last week <u> <p> The week from 15 to 21 was a beautiful week, because I went to Barcelona for my school trip with my school friends, of course. I had enjoyed myself a lot, but I had to come back and I didn't know why. (I don't know the reason now, too) We visited museums and tipical areas <A> and places <a> of Barcelona and all of these was very interesting. Theachers were very amusing, probably they looked after us a lot. <p> The hotel was very beautiful, only for businnes men, but the meal wasn't very good.

<T01/22.11>

I'm glad you enjoyed your visit to Barcelona. Well, the reason why you had to come back is probably that life is not a perpetual vacation (unfortunately)! But I often ask myself: "Would I really be happy if I were on holiday all the time"? Who knows? Maybe yes, maybe no. I have never been to Barcelona so I haven't got the slightest idea of the museums, places and typical areas you visited. It sounds interesting though!

<S05/13.12>

<U> My opinion about my test <u> <p> Sincerly I think test was difficult even if the results have been good. I though my test was very bad because there were a lot of long and difficult exercises with verbs that we have still studied. In this case I become a bit nervous and I don't think as I know. I only hope other tests'll be better and rimediare.

<T01/13.12>

The test was difficult but not impossible as the majority of the grades demonstrate. However, I'd like to ask you not to get discouraged because you have plenty of time to recover and understand what I want you all students to understand: the deep structure of the English language and the underlying mechanism which governs speech and writing. Have confidence in yourself, keep telling yourself that you'll make it!!! <p> I am really sorry these tests of yours did not give you the expected results because you are a very nice girl, studious and motivated. But don't worry! I'll teach you how to improve your reasoning.

<S05/25.01>

<U> A Journal <u> <p> Perhaps I'll be a bit boring, but in this moment I'd like to speak about my holiday in New York. This was a beautiful week-end and an exiting moment, because I could see a famous and interisting city. <p> I went to N.Y. with the most of my schoofriends and a few teachers, like the English's and German's teachers. <p> But, during this holiday, we wanted to thank the English's teacher, miss Morini, in particolary, because we visited the city with her help, based on her N.Y. knowning. Even if we travelled there one years ago, I love this city very much and I hope I will return there.

<T01/25.01>

The school-trip to New York is one of the nicest memories I have. I very often think about what we did together in this exciting city, about the beautiful exhibitions we saw and about all the walking, shopping and sight-seeing we did. It was very tiring for me to co-ordinate and organize everything and I appreciate you realized this, but I also had so much fun!!! I like school-trips. New York is one of my favourite cities, if not my favourite city in the world. It may sound strange but I am a "city girl". Big cities offer a great variety of activities: you can virtually do anything you want. If you have interests - say cultural or artistic - well, that's where you want to be. No wonder, you found the city interesting and appealing! I hope you will have other chances to visit New York and the States.

<S05/15.02>

<U> A Journal <u> <p> In the other one I spoke to you about our school-trip to New York. it <A> was <a> right when you said that in this city, everytmie, people can do anything they want - cultural or artistic interests - But yesterday I knew that our city gives you this possibility, too. (of course Reggio isn't N. Y. and the opportunities are less.) infact I went <A> 1 <a> with my schoolfriends <A> 3 <a> to <A> 2 <a> the theatre, and we saw a clashical ballet. There were 3 different moments (The River, The Chambre but now I don't remember the last title) with 3 ballets, very interisting and amunisg, too. <p> A part the beatiful theatre (I don't think Valli' Theatre wasn't so marvellous) all ballet was perfect and I say the true. I had never seen one, but now I hope I'll return to see an other, because I have enjoyed myself very much.

<T01/15.02>

Yes, it's true you can do a lot of things in Reggio if you want. But our small city does not compare with New York! No way!

However, we have one of the most beautiful theatres in Italy and a lot of interesting shows are constantly on. Ballet, opera, concerts (classical and jazz) and art exhibitions are held at the Municipale-Valli; but don't forget the Ariosto where drama is played. I'm glad you had the opportunity to go to this ballet performance, at least you now know what the theatre looks like inside! There is still a lot more to discover. We also have the Cavallerizza, another theatre which was only restored a few years ago. And I don't know if you know that Reggio is the capital of ballet dancing. We have two world-wide famous schools: Aterballetto and Cosi-Stefanescu. Ok. I will forgive you for not knowing this only because you come from Scandiano!

<S05/14.03>

During this journal, I'd like to speak about a problem that it's borning in this periode in my class. it's true when some of my schoolfriends say the work is too hard. Perhaps they don't think our school is a gymnasuim. They study during evening and night; and not only in the afternoon <A> so <a> they are very exhausted. <p> We have spoken with a few professors. <p> They think that we don't have a good organisation or a good method. For some of us it's true. ~~But this problem~~ Now my schoolfriends always complain and I'm a bit worried about this. I think this problem will become always worse, won't you?

<T01/14.03>

Maybe the situation will get worse. But I don't think it will. And I'll tell you why. The third year of high school is by far the most difficult year in post-middle school education. Students are confronted with more work and are required to process information in a more complex way. <p> I, therefore, understand why you are so bewildered. I agree with you in saying that our school is difficult also because it is a "liceo". Apart from the fact that high school should provide good training and preparation for college education, in general, I also think that both teachers and students should co-operate to achieve excellent results. <p> It is of no use your complaining about everything which is happening at school. Try to understand what's wrong as impartially as you can and look at things positively. Don't waste so much time grumbling! You'll see how things will get so much better next year!

<S05/16.05>

It's the end of the school year and I'd like to tell you that...<p> It's true, three weeks and then the end, summer sea, beach and more time for myself and my friends. But I must tell that this years was beautiful but hard, very hard. New teachers, new friends, new subjects. I always say that I wan't come back in my pass because I should make again everything. But I wan't. And this year is the same. I prefer go on, of course, and I hope I'll be in the 4° class with all my school friends next years, after three months <A> during which/in which <a> we can stay without stress. After a lot of school month everyone needs relief.

<T01/16.05>

Yes, it's absolutely true! After so much studying and teaching, everyone needs a break! I am glad you are not so discouraged and that your intention is to go on!!! But if I understand what you are saying, you don't want to start all over again because you prefer to face the "unknown" future rather than to go through the "hellish past" one more time. Am I correct? In a sense you are right, though. Life is waiting for you out there, why should you go back and start all over again? Have fun this summer, recharge your batteries and, above all, don't forget about English!!!

<S06/13.10>

One thing I have learned today. <p> Today I have learned something more about the -ing form. We have done with the teacher some exercises about it using verbs of sense. <p> I think it's sometimes difficult to understand the difference beetween the -ing form and the infinitive. <p> We were also told that in a week we will have a test. In ten minutes the lesson will be over and we will go to to a mostra su Mirò, which I think it will be interesting. We will see.

<T01/13.10>

It can be indeed problematic to use sense-verbs or verbs of perception correctly but if I were you I wouldn't worry too much because we will practise them a little bit more. Yes, it's true! In a week you'll be asked to take a test on the structures we have revised so far. I don't think you will have problems! Well, I do hope you'll enjoy the exhibition on Mirò's worksof art: you'll tell me about it next week.

<S06/20.10>

One thing I have learned today. <p> Today it was an interesting day. We have watched one of CNN news about two siamese twins. They had their liver in comune, but a good pediatric surgeon separated them. So I've learned a lot of new words like surgeon, liver, pediatric,......We have also done an exercise about a cat, that was enjoying enough. <p> Nico and I have spoken about ourselves and I've learned that Nico is extroverted with his friends. I couldn't imagine it, in fact I thought that he didn't like socializing.

<T01/20.10>

The two twins <U> shared <u> their liver that's why they had to separate them. I think that video-tapes are a good way to learn a language and I'm happy this activity made your day interesting. Not all pieces of news are amusing and funny but we have to face the problems of life and be always ready.

<S06/22.11>

What I did last week. <p> Last week I went to Hong Kong on my school-trip. <p> Hong Kong is a very nice town where the western mentality and the eastern one meet. We visited some beautiful places like Victoria Pic, Ocean Park, Aberdeen and a lot of shopping centres, that were not really very interesting. However we enjoyed ourselves a lot and I had the opportunity to know better Annalisa and Chantal.

<T01/22.11>

I'm glad you liked Hong Kong. I personally think it is a very interesting place so different from Europe. <p> To this day it is probably one of the most fascinating places I've visited especially for the food. I love Chinese food. And also, I'll always remember landing at Hong Kong airport. I had a clear feeling I was landing on the water, with skyscrapers and green mountains all around. I don't know what struck my imagination but I still have nice memories with me.

<S06/13.12>

What I think about my test. <p> Today I was given my test. I was very (satisfacted) //? <U> satisfied <u> of it/about it <A> ? <a> // because it was rather good wether I have done some stupid mistakes. <p> I think it wasn't very easy, but sometimes difficult classworks allow you to sfidare yourself. <p> Before doing the test I had a few difficulties in understanding the difference between the simple past and the present perfect, but now I'm sure enough about it.

<T06/13.12>

You can well be satisfied with your test as it turned out to be the best in the class. Although you have made a few mistakes (which is human, isn't it?) the outcome was gratifying for me, too. <p> You know, even if you students don't believe your teachers, we are happy when you <A> students <a> are successful. It is important if not necessary to learn how to solve difficult tasks and also to handle the challenge of life. It is good you are willing to test yourself because as a result you will become a more secure and mature person (well, you already are)!

<S06/24.01>

Yesterday I phoned Adrian, an Australian boy, who has been living in Viadana since December. <p> He told me about his country, because next summer I will probably go to Australia; I will stay there two months. <p> He likes Italy very much and he thinks the experience he is having allows you to become more mature. <p> He said life in Australia is very different and people are different, too. They are not so extroverted ando open as the Italians. The school system is also different. The lessons start at nine and finish about three or four in the afternoon, but there's no school on Saturdays. I'm very interested in school system, because next summer during my stage I will regularly go to school.

<T01/24.01>

I do encourage you to go on this program. I think it will be a wonderful experience, you will be able, first of all, to improve your linguistic skills. Secondly, you will get to know a different world, different people. Thirdly, it will be an interesting personal experience which will enable you to test yourself and to become independent. The school-system in Australia should not differ much from the american system. In the States, school is open five days a week from nine to three. From what your friend told you, I understand there's not that much difference. I'm really happy your parents are giving you this extraordinary opportunity. Don't forget to thank them a lot. And if you don't mind, I will ask you to report on your stay in Australia next September. I want to know what people and places are like there, because I have never been to Australia even if I've been dreaming of going for a long time now but unsuccessfully.

<S06/16.02>

Now I'm sitting in a train ward with my friends going home and I am thinking about last week-end. <p> What wonderful it was? <p> On Saturday night I went to a Carneval Party with my friends. We enjoyed ourselves a lot. In fact we were all mascherati and really ridiculous. I was lent a baby-dress by Elisa and I looked forward to wearing it. It was so funny? A lot of my friends were strange dressed and most of the boys wore a woman dress. At the party we danced, talked and ate a lot. On Sunday night we staged a wonderful show in the church childrengarten. Some friends of mine sang and danced. Instead I acted, even if I'm not so good at it. I interpretai the part of a very curious concierge and I enjoyed myself really a lot. The show resulted to be very very funny and amusing. <p> In this way beyond enjoying we become more friendly and sociable, but in particular we know each other better.

<T01/16.02>

Carnival used to be a funny time for me too; now I don't have time any more, unfortunately. My friends and I used to dress up and go to parties or discos where we had the best of times. Sometimes, I think I should organize something and go back to those funny times but every year is the same: I realize it's Carnival when it is almost over! Unbelievable! Maybe I'll get organized for next year. Carnival is a very interesting celebration, I studied an intriguing book some years ago on the origin and history of this public feasting. It was the time of year during which social roles could be overturned and therefore people could wear dresses belonging to a different social status. For us today, Carnival has lost the social implications it had once and although it still has a religious meaning, for most people it is an opportunity to wear fancy clothes and go about strangely clad. I'm happy you had such a wonderful time and I hope you can take part in many other parties like that in the future. Acting is also a nice activity. I didn't think you could act because you seem very shy and I have always thought that shy people do not have the courage to face a crowd. Probably, I am wrong. Actually I consider myself extrovert and outgoing but I wouldn't feel comfortable to act before an audience!

<S06/16.05>

I can't wait the last school day. In fact this year has been really very full and tiring, I would say too hard. But I think it has been also very costruttivo, because we have known each other better inside the class and we have become more close. During this school year I have also had a lot of ~~this~~ exciting experiences, like the trip to Hong Kong and my future trip to Australia. I'm really excited about this and I can't wait the day I am leaving on. Well it's ten minutes since I have started writing (I don't know if this form is correct) and now I have to stop.

<T01/16.05>

Although you did not write down your name, I think I can guess who you are! I'm very happy about your trip to Australia I am really convinced it will be wonderful!!! A great experience, indeed!!! I am terribly jealous, you know; I would like to pack my cases and go with you. But for God's sake! I think you've had enough of me this year. Anyway, I understand what you mean by "I can't wait to leave". I would be looking forward to leaving, too!!! Though you will have to go to school, I'm sure you'll have the opportunity to get some rest, too. Yes, I believe this has been a constructive year for everybody, or almost everybody. I hear different opinions and points of view on your class and not everyone thinks you have developed strong ties. But, of course, if you feel closer to your classmates, that's really good! I hope we can improve even more next year. Well, I'm looking forward to listening to the "performance" you have promised me to record for the whole class. I'm referring to the tune accompanying Lord Randal. I have always been so curious to know what it sounds like. But unfortunately I do not play any instrument! And feel free to write for as long as you feel like writing. And the form you have used is correct, though you can find it is + period of time + since + simple past all the same. I would have said: "As I have been writing for well over 10 minutes, I'll just stop here". <p> Bye, bye.

<S07/13.10>

One think I have learned today. <p> <A> Today <a> I have learned to understand better on articles, what is <A> more <a> import in it: I've learned a lot of words; I like to know how a word can have different meanings, even if this is a difficult of the language. I like to know <A> informal <a> words, that I can use in conversation, with English friends and differences betwen English and American. I like to change the subject during the lesson and not for esample grammar or <A> I like to <a> include grammar in an articles, in a lecture not only grammar exercises. But I think we have to do them because the language bases on the grammar. I like a <U> varia <u> lesson because I remain mor carefull and "I don't fall asleep" Today it was a varia lesson, because we <WU> mix <wu> the subjects we speak about different subject or of a same subject but in different ways.

<T01/13.10>

It's important to understand newspaper articles, how they are written, what's more important to remember of all the information given and so on. Of course words are a problem in English because they can have so many different meanings. This is indeed difficult but if you don't have any difficulty in learning a subject it's no fun! I hope to be able to organize my lessons in such a way not to bore you because boring teachers are awful! I'll do my best that's a promise but maybe I won't always find subjects interesting for you teen-agers. We'll see.

<S07/20.10>

Today we've finished to learn the <WU> funzioni <wu> of LIKE but the most interesting thing has been watching a video about two siamese twins, that have been separated. <p> It was very interesting, but I didn't like the imagines of the children when they were <WU> united <wu>. I think videos are very important to study e languages because they <A> can <a> help to complete my study, the <WU> compretion <wu>, the <WU> spoken <wu> language (lingua parlata) and they <A> aren't <a> usually boring, soprattutto if they ~~tell~~ speak about an argomento di attuality, strange facts. <p> <i> They are important too for change the <WU> rithmus <wu> of the lessons to make them more interesting. <p> The sentence I like more in the video was one of the mother of the children, ~~that~~ who said that it is nice to know that lots of people are <WU> disposti <wu> to help you, that means in our world thery is still good people.

<T01/20.10>

Well, hopefully there are still a lot of people willing to help. Being available for others is not the rule but maybe if we work on it the world will improve. The images you are referring to are actually disturbing but we cannot expect the world to be painted in pink. I'm glad you have enjoyed the video, it's true that through videos you can better learn the spoken language and the pronunciation. Comprehension is in fact enhanced by spoken discourse. I intend to take you all to the video-room quite often.

<S07/15.11>

One think I'm happy or sad about. <p> I'm happy because tomorrow we'll leave to Barcellona and trips are a way to make new friends or to <blank> a friendship. We are in a different rapport with the teachers and we can open our mind to oneother culture, although I think the Spain <A> mentality <a> is very similar to Italian. I like very much travelling and this is <A> still <a> interesting und amusing when you are with your friends. Sometimes you can quarrel with them, <A> because you prefer to be with someone in particulary <a> but this is natural and happen out of a trip too. <p> I like very much travelling by airplane, because it is very exiting, confortable and fast and with the train it is the only way I don't have headache.

<T01/15.11>

Travelling is interesting and fascinating (I like it very much too; actually I would always be on trips) and allows people to get in touch with another culture and to learn about different habits and customs. School trips, in particular, are a good way to socialize with school-mates and teachers too but, you know, there can be discrepancies among friends. As you say, it is quite normal. I love travelling by plane a lot too, I would dare say it's one of my favourite activities, though sometimes I'm afraid of crashing!

<S07/22.11>

This trip has been very strage, amusing and sad in the same time. <p> <A> It has been <a> amusing because I ve know better few my friends for example Cecilia that is very sensitive and pretty. <p> But there ~~was~~ <A> has been <a> very confusion with other persons with whom the rapport has got worse. At the end all ~~is~~ has gone good, but something is changed. <p> The weather was warm but the place not so beautiful as I imagined. <p> The new part of the city ~~was~~ is dirty, not caratteristica, instead the old part ~~was~~ is very beautiful, because is reach of monuments, and the natur seems a little bit esotic. There are palme for example <p> Eventually I' enjoyed myself because I <A> 've <a> socialized with e lot of school-mates, but probally one ~~ami~~ friendship, that I <A> take <a> care (a cui tenevo), is not more ~~like~~ as first <p>

But trips are anyway very interesting because they help you to crescere and know oneother culture.

<T01/22.11>

It is not always possible to get along with people the way you want. I hope that what happened during your holiday was not too bad and that the problems arisen will be easily overcome. I don't really know whether Barcelona is a typical Spanish town or not because I've never been there. It should be quite exotic, with palms and a strange vegetation because it is located near the sea and in a warm area. I'm sorry for your friendship, I mean the person you really cared for, but every experience is good in life because it helps you grow up. Look at life this way!

<S07/13.12>

What I think about my test. <p> I'm very satisf<WU>ate<wu>, because ~~in~~ <A> from <a> my point of view my test has gone good <A> enough <a>. I did enough mistakes, but these have been balanced by other tenses that perhaps with lucky I made right. <p> A good test does a happy person, but I believe that I ~~often~~ am often too connected (legato) <WU> to <wu> the note, perhaps because I think that it gratif<WU>is<wu> (gratifica) the work done at school and at home.

<T01/13.12>

We need a little bit of luck in life, but I don't believe it was just luck. You are a studious person and as a consequence you get good results. It's true that good grades or marks make a student happy. And of course, if a student studies hard, he/she feels gratified and satisfied after a successful test. In my opinion, you shouldn't give too much importance to grades. The most important thing is <U> to learn <u>; you can learn even if you fail a test. <p> But I know that from a student's point of view efforts and hard work must be followed by good results.

<S07/24.01>

Journal <p> <i> I would like to ~~s~~peak about my favourite friend Elena, whom I've known sience kindergarden. When we were small children we always played toghether, because we lived very close and still now we go out together. She is a very intelligent person, and what attracts in her is her good caracter: she is very optimistic and although she is not very slim, this is not a problem for her, <p> She is extremely generous, and already ready to help you. She is very good at school, she likes reading but she hasn't much spare time, because she plays volleyball too and she has the boyfriend: his name is Fabio. He is nice too and I think they are a very pretty (coppia).

<T01/24.01>

It's very considerate and thoughtful of you to feel the way you feel about this friend of yours. Friends are important and necessary to become fully mature persons, able to cope with life and to fit into society; that's why a sound relationship is a rewarding experience. I like the fact that you recognize a lot of good qualities to Elisa and that you are happy she is, not only happy, but a very good person also. As Elisa has a boyfriend and the two of them make a very nice couple, it won't be that difficult to become a very good friend of this guy and therefore spend more time with your friend.

<S07/14.02>

I agree with the answer you give me, because thanks Elena I learnt and I'm learning my difetti, my mistakes, she helps me to become more sure, less shy and whenever I'm sad I always think "Fortunately I have my friend Elena and not ~~why~~ because I'm sure she can solve my problems because it would be untrue, but she suggests me how to copy with them: <p> for example I said her that one of my friends was too aggressive with me and want how she wish...."Sit there...you are too thin and you have two too big teeth....". <p> Sometimes it is true remember (i difetti) but not always and especially when you can do nothing. I was so stupid that I haven't the (coraggio) to answer her and I continue to (subire): so Elena said me a little bit angry (with that person but also with me) that I had to answer how she merited, not to be mean, but to put end at this situation. One day I was able to answer him and in the evening she phoned me to know why I was angry and I explained her the reasons. Now we are good friends because both ~~of~~ are changed.

<T01/14.02>

Well, first of all, Elisa, let me tell you that you can't think of yourself as such a negative person. Everybody has faults. We are not perfect. Thanks God! Too much perfection would make the world so boring! But of course, one should make efforts to improve oneself, but also to accept one's limitations. If I can be sincere with you I would like to point you out what I feel you should try to cope with: shyness. But you already know this. Why do you feel so insecure? You should not!!! You are intelligent and nice-looking, polite and respectful, people can't but be happy to interact with you and must certainly seek your company and friendship. Don't pay attention to that stupid jerk, to what he told you about your teeth and your thinness. I don't personally think you are too thin and even if you were, there are so many girls in the world who would wish to be as skinny as you are! And your teeth are not too big; at least, I have never noticed they are. Think of the good qualities you have! Think of the so many people around you who like and appreciate you just the way you are, I mean with all the imperfections YOU are saying you have. On the other hand, you can't expect to be liked and loved by everybody. It would be wonderful but that's not the way it is. That's why you should feel happy with yourself and have the courage to assert yourself as a person. I am sure you will overcome your fears and will become more self-confident. After all, we deserve to feel at ease with others but we must work on it. You must want it! Forgive me if I took the liberty of discussing such personal matters so openly but I felt I owed you some support after reading your story. I believe that a teacher's role is not just to be confined to mere training but should instead include a lot more. I would appreciate your opinion on this.

<S07/14.03>

JOURNAL <p> <I> I'd like to speak about women holiday: I think it is a very important event because it remembers people and expecially mens the conquered women rights, indipendence and their equality with the other sex. <p> Men and boys say in some interview that it is a useless holiday, given that women have reached their purposes but I think that this isn't right, because in a lot of family fathers, that bring home money, lead <A> command <a> it and they feel superior the wives. <p> Moreover cases of violence and sexaul annoyance are more and more freauent and I think <A> because <a> right and exemplary measures haven't been taken and ~~because~~ <A> so <a> women are afraid of speaking.

<T01/14.03>

I don't exactly understand what you mean by 'women holiday' event. If you refer to the opportunities women nowadays have to pack up and go on a trip with friends, I'd like to express my joy and insatisfaction at the same time because I think that women still have a long way to go to reach full status equality. But it is undoubtedly true that much progress has been made and that many of the decisions women make remind everybody of their different role today compared to the past. It is a very complex question and much of interest especially for us; so we will probably discuss it in some detail next year.

<S07/16.05>

JOURNAL: <p> This year I have been and lived positive and negative moments. <p> The most positive is to have known a new good friend at school and outside. She has a mervellous caracter. She is always ready to help me, and I think she can help me to mature and change my self because she understand me, my personality. and defects <p> A negative aspect of this year was the <U> study <u>! <p> I have been some difficulties because I haven't still learnt to organise myself and to <WU> match <wu> school and sport. <p> So I have been some delusions, but the next year I want to chanche my study plains, to live the school more relax without <WU> afraid <wu> of not ~~to~~ being ready or wrong.

<T01/16.05>

Elisa, if I can, I would like to be of help. It is terrible to feel insecure all the time, to feel judged and examined thoroughly on any occasion. I hope I will be your teacher next year, so that we can continue our discussions and maybe I can teach you something more besides English. I don't understand why you are saying you have been dissappointed this year. Unless something happened to you during a tennis match I don't believe you have a right to complain about your grades! Anyway, just remember that it is not always possible to be the best, and what is even more depressing, it is sometimes difficult to show what one really is. And as a result, we feel frustrated because we are afraid of people's opinions. Who cares!? Just relax, have a nice summer and think about what I'm telling you: nobody is perfect.

<S08/13.10>

One thing I have learned today <p> Today I have learned the difference between the -ing form and the simple present. <p> I think I have understood all, that my English teacher has spoken about, but I don't know, if my classwork will be good. I have learned the verb <ITQ> to like <itq> too, ~~but~~ and this is very important for me, because last year when my English teacher had spoken about it, I ~~have~~ had understood nothing or less than nothing. Today we will have only two hours at school, because we'll go to visit an exposition about Mirò. This is very good, because today I'm very sleepy. However we'll come home at the same hour as usual, so we have no advantages. I only hope Mirò will be less boring than an italian's hour.

<T01/13.10>

I'm sure you have understood all I have told you today because the difference between the two present tenses should not be something completely new for you. Anyway, have confidence in yourself and the test you are going to take next week will be perfect! I'm glad you have finally learned the verb "to like" and its different uses. It is indeed a very important verbs because there are always so many things we like! Barbour jackets for example! I hope you have enjoyed the Exhibition. I usually love art exhibition. The opportunity you've been given to see it is important I think It's the gain of the day!!!

<S08/20.10>

One thing I have learned today <p> Today I've learned the verb <ITQ> to like <itq> and the differences between Simple Past and Past Continuous: more or less the same than the last week. <p> In a week, I'll have the classwork but I am quite relaxed, because I think, I have understood all I have learned. Today we have watched a reported about Siamese twins. I have understood what they said, when we have watched the reported the second time. But only at the third time I could answer the questions. Today I don't know what can I write, so I think is better, if I stop here my exercitation.

<T01/20.10>

It's better to feel relaxed about tests. When people are relaxed their brains work better. <p> From what you are telling me you did pretty good on the listening comprehension. The report was not extremety difficult but not so easy. So, my congratulations! I think it is good to repeat the experience.

<S08/15.11>

One thing I'm happy or sad about <p> Today I don't know if I'm sad or happy. I'm happy because tomorrow I'll go to Barcelona, but I'm sad because I will not see my friends for a week. <p> Perhaps I'm happier than sad. I like going to Barcelona because I can see some new things and I can spend a lot of money to buy some tipical dresses. I like Spanish fashion very much. I like travelling very much too because when I come back, all my friends <bs> and <be> my parents are happy to see me. <p> My mother is always sad, because she doesn't like that I go too far. But I think that in two or three days, she can rassegnarsi. I hope I enjoy myself very much and I can spend lots of money.

<T01/15.11>

I personally think that travelling is educational from many points of views You can see things, meet people and why not spend money too. But be careful not to waste money otherwise you'll go broke. I can hardly believe your mom doesn't want you to go on trips or too far away as you say because she has always welcomed trips and activities enthusiastically. I bet she likes to travel herself. That's why she is happy to give you a chance of going too. Of course, she may worry for you because you never know what can happen.

<S08/22.11>

What I did last week <p> Last week I went to Barcelona with my class. We ~~have~~ visited this city very well and now we are tired.

We walked very much, because the teachers didn't want that we took the bus. However we had so much fun. I think that Barcelona is a very nice city, because there are lots of museum and churches but I don't like it very much, because there aren't good shops. Infact I have spent not too much. <p> I thought that I would have spent lots of money like in New York. But it doesn't matter, because with this money I can buy some things here in Italy.

<T01/22.11>

It's unbelievable you didn't spend much money during the trip. Probably, nothing appealed to your tastes. On the other hand, if you think that it's going to be Christmas soon you were wise not to spend money on uninteresting things. And then, Italy is the best place to go shopping. The only problem is that everything is sooooo expensive. Well, from what I understand you walked a lot and teachers tested your physical endurance as happens every time a group is touring a place and visiting around. I am not the only one then who wants you to walk and look around!

<S08/13.12>

My opinion about my test. <p> My test is very bad. Sincerly I thought I would have made a worst test, but I hoped in a 7. I am quite happy, but I think my mother won't be so happy. I have studied all the last weekend and now I think that I could have studied less. But I'm happy because I am <U> costante <u>; infact my test is not worst than the last. I hope that my next test will be better and I'm going ~~to~~ studying to make a better test.

<T01/13.12>

I don't personally think your test is very bad. I do think that you could do better than that. If I were you I would be quite satisfied; first of all because it is true your test shows a steady mark but would add that it also reflect a remarkable improvement as it was by far more difficult than the previous test. Secondly, you don't have to forget your poor classmates, I mean the ones who failed the test! But I believe that your desire to do your best and get a good grade reflects your interest in the language. I'm sure you'll make it! Don't give up! And continue to study hard. I'm going to deal with tense use for a while.

<S08/24.01>

Last week I was really sad because it was my birthday and I was ill in bad. <p> I had to do a big party in my house with all my friends: 30 persons! All day long they phoned to ask me: <ITQ> How do you do? Do you have the party on Saturday? <itq> <p> I always answered: <ITQ> I'd like ~~to~~ doing my party, but I don't feel ~~wer~~ very well! <itq>. Finally came Saturday and the doctor told me that if I didn't go out I could have my party. All my friends came and I was very happy, but it has been a terrible week.

<T01/24.01>

It can happen that you feel awful or you are ill in bed just when you have something important to do or when you want to celebrate something. As far as I am concerned, I like partying on my birthday, not one day earlier not one day later, but of course, in case of illness, it wouldn't be a tragedy to postpone the celebration. Anyway, I'm glad you didn't have to reschedule your party and organize another one.

<S08/15.02>

<i> I think it will take a lot of time before I forget the 8th of February 1994. In fact this day I received my school report and I had a very big disappointment. <p> I was sure to have always studied even if, sometimes, I didn't had the success I waited. I didn't realize why in all the subjects I got only "six" and above all I was really surprised for German's mark. I worried for my parents' remark and I was afraid that they didn't allow me to go dancing on Sunday. But, fortunately, when my mother

understood that I felt bitterly disappointed, told me: <ITQ> Don't cry, I know you have studied. I think that your next school report will be good <itq>. I felt better, but I didn't remove my disappointment and I decided to study more and more.

<T01/15.02>

Manuela, disappointments are unfortunately events we can try to rationalize but not avoid. I'm not saying that you have to accept life in a passive way; on the contrary, be always ready to struggle and improve yourself but not always what you give or feel you have given will correspond to gratification and satisfaction. Sometimes we don't deserve it and sometimes life is not fair to us. I do not know what happened with your grades and, of course, I will not discuss to which of the above cases your sadness is to be attributed. I would like to give you some advice instead, in order for you to live better because I can see you are not relaxed. First of all, the more you worry and feel troubled, the less efficient you are. So, stop feeling anxious about grades: the day will come when you are happy. Secondly, I like your decision of facing the situation. It reflects maturity and responsibility. Good luck for the future. I'm sure you'll be much happier with the next school-report!

<S08/13.03>

Yesterday at school, we have spoken about some problems we have in our class. Some of my friends say that they are too tired, because they have a lot to study and they can't sleep anymore. I think that is impossible, because I have to study too, but I sleep. I go out with my friends and I ~~haven't~~ don't think always ~~what~~ on which I have to do. Logically I haven't very good marks, but I think that if I have to suffer ~~to~~ go<A>ing<a> to school, I prefer ~~enjoy my self~~ not to have very good marks, but enjoy myself and live my life.

<T01/13.03>

I do think that you have adopted a wise approach to the problem. Of course, not everyone reacts to situations in the same way. However, one should know exactly what to expect from different behaviours and decisions. One should be aware of his/her own actions. <p> If you feel that total devotion to school is not what you are craving for, then take your time to do other activities. The moment you decide that time has come for better grades, you can always go back and study more. <p> You don't have to feel frustrated for too much studying nor ~~for~~ should you be depressed for very bad marks. <p> Everybody is looking for balance in life. You seem to have found a good compromise.

<S08/18.05>

It's the end of the school year and I'd like to tell you that... <p> The school year is finished and I can only say that I'm very tired. Perhaps because I haven't studied since the begin of the school, but only since february. Infact I have to have good marks now because I'm not so good as I was last year for example. <p> But I can say that I enjoyed myself during this year, because it wasn't a quite year, but we have had lots of problems. I didn't have any problem, but many people in my class ~~told~~ complained of their troubles. Because of these complaints we had ~~had~~ always had something to discuss about. I've had a lot of new ~~thea~~ teachers and I can say that I liked ~~every~~ each of them. <p> To sum up I hope next year will be like this or, of course, better.

<T01/18.05>

Well, it's nice to hear that there are people who can focus on the constructive side of difficult and demanding situations. I don't know whether you are courageous or crazy, because if you tell your classmates you have had a lot of fun while they were suffering and struggling I think they will just hang you! I am, of course, joking. I understand what you mean. Life is no fun if it is too easy especially for active and lively people. And more importantly, it is no use complaining about one's own troubles, it is better to act or to forget. But I believe we have already discussed this point!

<S09/13.10>

One thing I have learnd today <p> Today my english teacher gave me my hopmework It was a desaster! <p> I'm spending //attraversando// an unhappy moment because I've changed my school and However my teachers and my school friends are very pleasand I feel (my self?) very (insicura e insoddisfatta but I think that every day, going to school, I find a little of coraggio to go avanti, because I want to become good to school. <p> I'm afraid //paura// of english classwork. I know that if it <A> will <a> go bad I'll forget fiducia in my self but I know also that I must superare all this disagio to became an andult. I think I understand the english lesson but when I <A> 'll <a> do then exercises I think it could be catratrofic we'll see!!

<T01/13.10>

Cheer up Laura! <p> Nothing is impossible. I can understand that you are going through a very bad period because of the change. But don't lose confidence in yourself! It will be hard to catch up with your classmates in the beginning but you'll improve if you want to. When you feel something is not clear just ask. Teachers are usually happy to help students who <U> really <u> want to learn. And don't get depressed in case your grammar test will not be as good as you hope it to be. Don't feel insecure and dissatisfied <U> just <u> because <U> one <u> test has not turned out as good as you wanted it to be. there's nothing catastrophic about a bad test or exercise and remember English is a beautiful language.

<S09/20.10>

One thing I have learnd today <p> Today I have known some new words and rules, but in particurale I've seen that there are <A> bigger <a> and more difficult problem than mine. <p> For exemple the two siamese twins...I think that their parents were desperate about their situation. <p> Today I've also known that I can't go out from this school if one of my parents come to take me. HORRIBLE! <p> Today the teacher told us about the PAST SIMPLE and THE PAST CONTINUOS, but I'ven't understand anything because had to go to the preside. Today I'm very tired because Yesterday I've studied a lot to improve my languages and this afternoon I must to study history. <p> I HATE IT! <p> I'm a sensible <B> insecure <b> girl and I'm happy if there is ~~one~~ a person who tell me that all will go ok!

<T01/20.10>

I'm happy you' are learning new words and structures. Don't worry about the Simple Past and the past Continuous because we will do a lot of exercises and I'll explain everything again. Why didn't you get permission to get out of school earlier? What did the Principal tell you? I know you are making an effort to catch up with English but in a few months you'll see the difference. You will be much better. If you want to see improvement you must study hard. It's going to be hard but you will make it I'm sure. People with "good will" are usually satisfied with their results.

<S09/14.11>

One thing I'm happy/sad about <p>Today is Monday. It ~~'s~~ usually is a horrible day, but today I know that tomorrow morning at this time I well //'m// ~~be~~ speep(ing) because all my classfriend will be on a trip. WONDERFULLL!! <p> ... but I know also that I must study hard when I will be at home. <p> Yes, today I'm quite happy because I'm alive and because I have a lot of friends who love~~s~~ //(mi vogliono bene)// and two lovely parents (not always). I can shine stupid, but I think I'm <A> not <a> if <U> now <u> I'm happy. I know that I ~~'m~~ have not high marks at school. BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER!! I'm studying hard. THIS IS IMPORTANT. I'm ~~MAKIN~~ //doing// MY BEST. <p> In the life of a person is important that he or she is happy because he/she is not alone also when he/she is <A> starò soffrendo <a>. <p> and I know that if I'm not good at school I'm ~~being~~ not being ALONE. <p> What I wrote is very INCASINATED because I didn't know exoctly what I wanted to write. (CURIOSO, vero?)

<T01/14.11>

Happiness is so important for human beings because it gives a meaning to their lives. When we are happy we see things in a different light, everything reflects and mirrors our inner disposition. It is, therefore, not significantly important to have a good reason to feel happy about. If you are happy, any reason producing the emotion is to be considered priceless. You mention solidarity and people caring for other people as two main aspects. (actually it is the same thing) of happiness. I agree with you completely; no matter how frustrated you are if you know somebody is ready to help you and understand your problems you are more likely to overcome the "crisis".

<S09/22.11>

"What I did last week" <p> I spept!!! <p> I relaxed myselb and I recharded my batteries because I was very busy //stanca//!!! <p> I studied a little. I wanted to do more. I ho accompagnato my boyfriend to <A> ? <a> the doctor because he has a ghiandola sotto il mento and we don't know what <A> it <a> is. I am very preoccupata. <p> I look farward to know his risultati of blood esami //examines??// <p> I hope (for) the best. I cryed a lot but I don't want that he knows that I'm preoccupata, altrimenti //so// he begin worried <A> ? <a> he thinks that his ghiandola is a silly thing so I want that he rimanga tranquillo!

<T01/22.11>

When one is tired and worn out it's better to stop any kind of activity and recharge one's batteries as suggested by the article. I'm sorry to hear that your boyfriend had to see a doctor because of an irritated gland. Don't worry before you exactly know what it is. Probably, it is not a gland. As far as I know we do not have glands under the chin. But I'm not a doctor so don't trust me! As soon as you get the results of your boyfriend blood test everybody in the family will feel better. In case there is a problem, well, you'll have to face it then, but only then.

<S09/24.01>

What a day! I'm so tired (or I'm <U> over<u>ed<arrow> do you remember?) the school is distruggendo me and I look forward to be on holiday. I imagine the sea, the beach, go out with my friends on bike. WONDERFUL!! <p> I'm ~~heo~~ listening "LA DONNA CANNONE" F. de Gregori. Do you like it. I hope that my pagella will be good or decente. Teachers ~~are~~ in general ~~non comprensive with~~ <A> don't comprendono <a> us. <p> Yes, yes, we must study hard and we hadn't to be lazy. it's <U> too <u> !! Last week I didn't sleep all night because I have to study? HORRIBLE. We can't <U> so <u> go on. What do you think. <p> I'm happy of you teaching. I think you're a very good teacher and you have also a good pronuncia. (pronunciation) I would like* to teach like you when I'm adult *(CI VA IL FUTURO là?) Tornando alla scuola. Now I can't see my friends anymore. I'm <U> always <u> over books OK, but my adolescenza. I'm lucky to have a comprehensive boyfriend he always says me "oh! don't worry (Baby)" When I saw //say // him that I have to study and when I can go out he's always disponibile to see me. <p> he sings in a rock group. they will go on Video Music. I'm afraid he can be famus but he says that in a life of a person isn't important successful or power //strong//(?) but love, family and to be ("a posto" con se stessi). <p> Early it will be Carneval. I'll <WU> wear a cloth like <wu> Blues Brothers with ~~my~~ one of my friends. <p> My want that I'll go abroad this summer. I love my warm Italy and I would like to spend my holiday reading books studing (in modo rilassato) and to have sunbaths. <p> I (andrei) via with noone. ALONE!! I have (intensi) social relationships. ALONE ABROAD. OOH! My <U> GOD <u> What can I do? Can I <A> 'll <a> write <A> a postcard <a> you if I'm sad or I don't know how to doy? <p> I think that this experiences make you adult. <p> I think I'll leave with letters that Giulio (♥) wrote me and with all my cassets. <p> I have also one where G. sing with his group. they're very good. <p> Today is Monday and tomorrow I have a <A> german <a> classwork NO COMMENT. <p> Ms Coccolini speak of us (quelli nuovi) like different persons <U> Why <u> It'sn't right. <p> She says "the old second or quelli dell'altra school" OHH!! We are all at <U> THIRD <u> YEAR, <U> all <u>. <p> Yes. Ok there're differents but... Laura stops your<U>self<u> better. <p> SEE you ~~LATER~~ ON WEDNESDAY! <p> Laura <p> OPS! THEREISNT a letter...

<T01/24.01>

Dear Laura, I'm so touched and moved by your journal: it is so nice, personal and spontaneous! Well, I'll try to answer all your questions if I can. School. OK, you may feel school is destroying your life and I am sure that it is absorbing all your energies. But you know better than I that this is a very tough year for you. You and your friends from Modena are not UFO (unidentified flying objects) but students who need to work harder because you've got to catch up with schoolwork which was not dealt with by your previous teachers. I'm sure Mrs. Coccolini means just this. I personally think that you are doing great, just great! I do know you want better grades, you will get better grades. It just takes time!!! Trust me! I know what I'm saying. You are starting to understand the mechanism and this is what I want: reasoning. My aim is to prepare my students so that they can cope with the language at any time. It would be an interesting experience to go abroad. After all, what is a month in a person's life. You'll have the entire life to come to spend with your friends and part of the summer too. Of course, you can write to me. I'll be happy to support you if you need help or just to hear that you are happy and are enjoying yourself a lot. I'm glad you like my teaching. I love my job. I think it is interesting and sometimes just sometimes rewarding, too. I'm happy when I am with my students even if I very often get angry and yell. Back to your journal, I don't understand where you want to use the future. Not after would like and not in the time clause. Please explain. I'm sorry to have to admit that I don't know the song you were listening to. But I know who F. de Gregori is. He was famous when I was a teenager. Maybe I'm not so old after all, if you are listening to the same music! As to Giulio, he sounds nice and understanding. And don't worry, he'll be waiting for you when you come back from your holiday abroad. Why are you afraid he might be famous one day? You are not going to lose him for his success. Not necessarily. What else? Carnival. Yes, I used to dress up, too and I wish I could dress up now again. Last time I dressed up was 8 years ago. It was a lot of fun! And remember you are NOT going to wear a cloth. Check it up in the dictionary and report. OK, that's about it. "I'll catch you up later" as the Americans say.

<S09/14.02>

What you have written is very nice and I'm happy to know you better. <p> I, normally, want to have a relationship with some of my best teachers and I would like to try to have one with you. <p> I admire you because you have learnt me how to love the english language and how to study it. <p> Last year I didn't like english and I hated study it. Now it's all changed. Thank you.

<p> I want to improve my english and I want to arrive where I want (to) <arrows> ?. I think you understand. <p> I'm stodying hard because I hope that a day I will be able to speak and to write a good english. Well, I want to be good not only because I want to get good grades, but because I want to know english. I <A> really <a> love it. <p> When I'm at home and I can study with out stress because of a class work., Well I'm so happy. Do you belive me? try to understand gramatic rules, try to lern words... When I'm at school and I can see you speak english language like it's italian...I tell myself that <A> I <a> would like to be like you. Although sometimes you get ~~h~~ angry when we don't study. Today I'm excited. Today is S. Valentino. <p> I've never lived this day with a boy! Last years I was a different person outside and inside me. <p> I weighed 77 kg I was a bomb and noone wanted to go out with me and my personality was...How to say, well it was <A> so <a> different. I'm sure I wasn't sympatic <U> person <u> because I was unhappy. and I think that when a person isn't happy can't be always sympatic to all the other. What do you think? <p> I'm glad you like~~d~~ my journal and also your answer is nice. OPS.! I've just wrote it SORRY! I'm a little bit "sclerotic". <p> I think you' re right when you say what you think. It's a very important thing in a person and unfortunately <A> only <a> few people are so. In the school too!!!... <p> I wanted to ask you what I can do "in surplus" to improve my language. I know that I'm not a <U> UFO <u> but I want to be like some of my new schole friends. who get good grades. My mother <A> normally <a> asks me "what grades has <A> got <a> ~~asked~~ Annalisa or Chantal but she has never asked me what grades has got persons like Alice, Francesca or Elise and I get angry. because I have to look at the best students and I think I'm right, you see...? <p> Also Giulio hated me ~~and he could loo~~ and for me it was horrible. Then my mum (♥) mi ha convinta to ~~lose~~ go to a dietist (dietologa) I've lost 17 kgs and <bs> also now <be> I'm on a diet.

<p> When I ~~like~~ began to love ~~my self~~ me also the other persons begann to. Also Julie. <p> and today I'm happy because I have a lot of frinds and him (the most important) and this evening I will be able to eat kisses PERUGINA not with a boy, but with Giulio. I've alway loved him. (non volevo dargli il significato di AMARE ma non conosco nessun altro verbo) <p> I will give him a scarf (sciarpa) that I've personally made! and a I've written a lovely letter. <p> I look forward to see him! <p> then I'll tell you ~~wa~~ what he has given to me <p> Good <A> and happy <a> Valentino's day! <p> I've just red your journal again and I would like to aswer you about some of your questions. <p> I'm afraid, about Giulio success, because I don't want that he could lose his personality and his pourpose in life. but I know him very well and I doubt it! (I HOPE!!) I think you are a very pleasant person and you are also very slim (Maybe a day I'll be slim like you and my mum) and I would like to see you wear a Carnival cloth. <p> I reread my journal and I've noticed that I've used few italian words and also the english sounds better. I've remembered more english words! <p> and I'm happy about this. Although I can forget my desastrous exercise of today! Oh I hope you say me (in fretta) what to do BECAUSE I WANT IMPROVE MYSELF. DON'T FORGET <U> IT <u> <p> Have you put something about my exercise on you class (registro)...Only to know... <p> Now I have to go because I'm going to celebrate my first S. Valentino's day! <p> Buy Buy! and Ah! I would like you don't think to me not only like a normal students. if you want. <p> Laura

<T01/14.02>

Hi Laura! <p> I know you expected an earlier reply but it has been impossible for me this time to write sooner. What I usually do, though, is read all journals as soon as I get home because I am extremely curious and like the journals a lot! <p> I am very flattered by what you have written because you have been so good to me! Anyway, I really hope I'll be able to build up a good rapport with my students and I am open to do so with those who are interested in establishing a different relationship with the teacher. Of course, I can't force those who don't give a damn about it. <p> In class I don't have much time to discuss personal situations; so I'd like to take the opportunity now to assure <A> you <a> that your English has been improving <U> a lot <u> since the beginning of the school year. Believe me! The grades you are getting are not great. OK! But you don't have to consider grades. Consider how much you have learnt, how much you know today compared to last year. You are now going through a transitional period which is useful to fix everything in your brain. After that, you'll be fine and you'll be able to compare with the best students in the class. But as I have told you several times it takes time. But remember, I am more concerned with learning and acquisition than grades. Of course, a good grade is a good grade! <p> Well, beside spending some time in the UK next summer, you could start reading short stories in English (I can give you a few) in order to improve the language. Reading is really good, I mean, excellent exercise. I'm really thrilled to know (and I do appreciate it) that you like English. That's what you need <A> in order <a> to learn: interests and motivation. <p> I hope that your Valentine's day was a happy one. You see, situations can improve and get better! <p> I didn't know you were on a diet. If loosing weight has helped you become a better person, keep an eye on it. But please don't feel frustrated because you are not thinner; thanks to your diet you have reached a more than reasonable weight. You should be happy. It's OK like this now. <p> It's true that when you start to love yourself you feel better. It's important to be able to like one's personality and appearance, to enjoy other people's company and life in general and I am happy you have managed through this achievement of yours. Don't forget that it is also necessary to accept one's limitations because we can't be perfect. On the whole, I would be satisfied with myself if I were you because in these last few years you have faced a lot of changes (weight, personality and school) and you seem to have everything under control. And most important, you are now able to appreciate life and feel worth giving and receiving.

<S09/14.03>

Mss Morini. How are you? <p> I'm under stress because of the schol. I HATE OUR SCHOOL. it thinks only to give us a good preparation. Noone thinks at our years. When I'm graduated or when I'm attending university and I have an excellent preparation, who will be able to give me back my 16/17 years... also a minute is important in the life of a person. <p> OUR SCHOOL IS WRONG. Some of my classfriends think that, tout I hate when we are talking about our scholl problems and the bests (...) say nothink. they look the sky and don't understand our problems <p> But the worst is that they say nothink. <p> Also Manzoni didn't like persons like these (Don Abbondio, do you remember "Promessi Sposi" I think it's one of the best novel I've read) Anyway...What can we do? <p> I don't know what, now, but ~~somethink~~ I think we'll do something <p> Today Mss Rossi has told me that she ~~want~~ would like that I spend a weekend in her hous. he would like to change my brain, and to help to me to overcome my stressness. <p> am I so strange? <p> Proff. What do you think? I hope <U> you <u> can understand me. Now I want to tell you something about my S. Valentine's day. It was really romantic. Giulio gave me a bild that shows ~~with~~ a cat that says "How much I love you!" <p> He's really a special person. If you could know him you ('ll) find ~~him~~ phantastic. (I'm not sure about this clause). He's tall, thin, with blue eyes and blond hair. Yes yes, blond eyes, ops! blue eyes and blond hair but his beauty is inside him. He's REALLY SPECIAL. Oviestly I'm not sure, but I think <A> a day <a> we'll get married. We can understand very good each other. the truth is that it isn't difficult understand him. <p> I would like to ~~see~~ meet Giulio oftener but I haven't free time to spent how I want (to). Insomma ci va o no questo <circleds> to <circlede>. Please answer. <p> Weekdays I have to study OF COURSE, on Saturday I must go to Mantova where my futher and my grandparents live and there I don't go out I think it's very sad. <p> On Saturday I go to curch in the morning. In the afternoon I study and finally I GO OUT WITH GIULIO to eat a PIZZA. <p> However I would like to see him also on saturday but dad doesn't want. <p> I don't know what to write again so I greet you. <p> Laura <p> I SIGN BECAUSE I CONSIDER IT LIKE A LETTER.

<T01/14.03>

Dear Laura, <p> I agree with you totally! Also one minute is important in the life of a person. But what you decide to do with that minute is also important. You can spend your time in different ways just take the right decision (as if it were easy!). Well, I now have the impression that you feel better, everything is crystal-clear at least as far as our opinions are concerned. It is time for you to slow down a bit and relax, you don't have to feel life pass over you. Just react. When the weather gets nice and warm you could go for a walk before you start studying. You will feel more concentrated and ready to absorb concepts and notions. But we went through this in detail last night, so I won't get into it again. <p> Back to what we were discussing last night, I'd like to emphasize that it is important that you behave exactly as you feel you should. Of course you have to make an effort to try to get along with your classmates, you should try to avoid vexing them but just think that they can't possibly expect you to completely change your nature. You are a very spontaneous person and you should always try to be the way you are. <p> I'm glad to hear that your Valentine's Day turned out to be a success. I don't understand the kind of present Giulio gave you. What is it that he gave you? As to the grammar rule you asked me about in the journal, I'll just say that after the verb "to want" (but also other verbs) the infinitive is not usually repeated you just repeat "to". For example, you can say: "I went there because I wanted to". To at the end of the sentence is used instead of the whole infinitive. But let me rephrase your ideas, I mean not rephrase, rather correct more important aspects of the sentence. "I would like to meet/see Giulio more often but I haven't got/don't have any free time/enough free time to spend as I want to/would like to". But don't worry! It is most natural to make mistakes. So, don't be upset. I told you that I am happy with your achievements! I am exhausted today, I'm sorry I can't write about more interesting topics. So, I'll talk to you later!

<S09/16.05>

Journal: <p> I would like to say: THANK YOU! <p> First of all because you've ~~learnt~~ taught <A> me <a> ~~w~~how to learn English but above all HOW TO LOVE IT. Now I'm happy when I can study english without stress. When I'm at home <A> and <a> I have to study the <A> english <a> language, literatur or grammar, it doesn't matter what. <p> I ALWAYS SPEAK in a LAUD voice and I ENJOY MYSELF VERY MUCH. It's exciting speaking a foreign language and express what you want <arrow> PHANTASTIC! <p> Thank you also because you have helped me ~~because~~ to know you better. I think you're a very special person and I would like to have the opportunity also in the future to write to you and when I am older I would like to become one of your(s)<A>?<a> friend because you have given me a lot. You've <A> a <a> ~~very~~ special heart and I hope you give ~~the~~ opportunities to <A> the <a> others* <FT> *(...sometimes I'm asheimed of volerti (ing form) <A> così <a> bene) <ft> to know it better. At the beginning of this year ~~you didn't like me very much~~ I hadn't a good opinion on you but all have changed. <p> - This year I've also learnt to belive in my abilities and <A> how <a> to contin<A>?<a>ue<A>?<a> also when your life presents difficulties. I always think that our school is too difficult and the environment here is horrible! people are snobbish! <p> Anyway...What I'm going to ask you it doesn't deal with the title, but please if you want, aswer me ~~?~~ <p> do you think that two persons (like me and Giulio) could have the possibility to get married (in a future of couse) also ~~if one of~~ if one <A> of them <a> has studied and ~~one~~ <A> the other <a> hasn't? <p> the english is horrible but I hope you've understand. Anyway, Giulio is very clever and he has decided to (rebigin <A> ? <a>) to study and to take a (diploma) I'm very proud about this.<p> When I am not at school (during summer holiday) I'll send you one of our photos. <p> I want to say you about the title that I'm really happy that we're not far from the end of the schoolyear <p> I'm exhausted, and I look forward to be on holiday After the end of the school year I'm going to remain two days in my loved bed! I have not the intention to go to school when the other are on the trip. Do you thin~~g~~k I shoul? I would like to inform you that I don't like my class very much,well not ~~all~~ <A> everyone <a>, but with the maggiority, more or less. I haven't exablished a relation ships. I think it's sad. But people I'm talking about sometimes doesn't say what they think, but not necessarily because they are shy...it's their personality. I've serious difficulty to exstablish a friendship with this kind of person, although I recognize their pregi. What do you think <A> I <a> should do? <p> <U> I hope <u> the next year the situation will change between us because this year the atmosphere in our class has been really ~~horr~~ awful (how the Americans say) for me. <p> Ah! ~~I would like, if you want~~ <p> if you wanted <you could (exchanged)> ~~spea~~ tell me something about your experience in America . <p> - about the family <p> - what did you do, more or less, during the day <p> - how were parties? <p> - how are Americans? <p> thank you <p> Laura

<T01/16.05>

Thank you for your beautiful journal! <p> I am more than happy to hear that this year has been one of growth and maturity for you. It is important to test oneself and understand that it is always possible to make it!!! Most of all it is of the utmost importance not to lose one's dignity. Everybody has some, though little it may be. I'd like to take this opportunity to compliment you on your achievements as to the English language. But wait don't try to learn everything at one time! I would also like to thank you for all the nice things you have written to me. It is encouraging to know that somehow someone appreciates me the way I am and the things I am doing. I am very curious though and I'd like to know why you didn't like me at the beginning of the school year and why you changed your mind. You can indeed become one of my friends if you like and among other things you can ask me for advice but you have to promise me that before adopting my point of view (or more in general anybody's point of view) you will critically analyze all my suggestions. I like to have an open and constructive relationship with people, sometimes I teach and sometimes I learn. See, I don't know whether it is possible for people of different cultural and educational backgrounds to stay together. Probably it is. It very much depends on the people. But if I were you I wouldn't worry about that. you are too young to think about marriage. Seize the day! Don't think about tomorrow too obsessively otherwise you will spoil your beautiful present moments. Don't think in absolute terms, it's wrong! I used to be like you once and then life taught me how to change. Well, maybe I was just forced to change but I have accepted that, and I feel better. <p> I think you should come to school when the others are in Sardinia so that we can say good bye to one another. But it all depends on how many of you are going to come. If you are too few, then I think and guess nobody will have to show up. My experience in the States was very interesting and decisive for me. Thanks to it I have a better and much deeper understanding of the world. But I'll tell you about it some other time. <p> <U> See you! <u>

<S10/13.10>

<U> One thing I have learned today <u> <p> Today I have learned how to use to like in two different ways. <p> I have also impro~~u~~ved a little bit my reading, known some new words and made a couple of grammar Exercises. <p> I think English is a beautiful language, but now I guess it's very hard, too. <p> There are lots of words that have the same meaning and each word has got different meanings. <p> I hope <A> my English will <a> be better and better, both spoken and written. <p> Now, I <A> still <a> make lots of grammar mistakes and my language is not very fluent, but I think and I hope I can be better.

<T01/13.10>

You will certainly improve your English especially from now on because classes will be more difficult, we will read a lot, write a lot and talk a lot. You have already understood that English is a relatively easy language but this is the interesting part! It's a challenge! And since you like the language and want to improve and learn more you'll be able to handle the challenge!

<S10/20.10>

<U> One Thing I have learned Today <u> <p> Today I've ~~listened to CNN,~~ watched a report on CNN; it was about the separation of siamese twins. <p> It was a very hard operation (in fact there is only 5% of success in carring out this type of surgery), but the pediatric surgeon was able to cut through the levers of the infants. <p> It hasn't been difficult to listen to the report, but the pronunciation changes some words, so often I can't understand if it's one word or another one. I have a very little vocabulary, but I like the language very much and I want to

improve, so I think and I hope I'll be able to handle the challenge!

<T01/20.10>

Of course you will! You are very fluent in your writing, which means that you have acquired not only structures and vocabulary but also self-confidence. I'm glad you realized that English pronunciation can change. American English is indeed different but it's important to be used to different accents so that you can communicate better and with more people from all over the world. Back to our video, carrying out the separation of the Siamese twins must have been hard but think about the surgeon who performed it. He must be so proud of himself!

<S10/15.11>

One thing I'm happy/sad about. <p> I'm happy 'cause tomorrow I won't have to go to school: I'm going to Barcellona and I hope I'll enjoy myself in that wonderful and caotic city. <p> I don't know much about Spain, and Spanis habits, I can't speak Spanish very well, but I'm ready to improve my language and to learn many new and strange things (a different point of view, different habits and a different sort of life). <p> I adore travelling, especially when, like now, I'm bored, tired and a bit sad: if you're not in your best mood, an exciting and successful trip or vacation can change (in better) your humour and even your life!

<T01/15.11>

Actually getting away is known to be a good solution to problems. I'm sure, the vacation, though short, will make you a lot of good. Not only is it a way to learn more about different habits and customs but it is also the right answer to stress and anxiety. Why are you sad and bored? Once in Barcelona you'll forget everything about Reggio and in that chaotic city you will paradoxically rest and relax!

<S10/22.11>

What I did last week <p> Last week I went to Barcelona. <p> I hoped and guessed it had to be a relax vacation, to recharge myself and assass my life. <p> But, unfortunately, it wasn't so wonderful and funny as I expected: the city is really beautiful and strange, the weather was fine, not very cold and quite sunny (there was only a little wind in the evening); only one thing, the most important, wasn't working at all: friendship. <p> I had two really terrible days, I felt lonely, sad and I wanted to return home, but now everything seems to go better; it is not the same as before, but now I can speak with my friends and I feel a little bit better. <p> My friends in Rubiera have also helped me to understand that everything will be soon better and that they won't never let me lonely make me sad and hurt me!

<T01/22.11>

Friends are very important, especially at your age. So I'm not surprised to hear that you felt sort of betrayed by your classmates because you felt alone. However, you should start considering that friendship doesn't always "run smooth" and misunderstandings can arise and can blot our relationships. I hope you have now sorted out your problems and reconciled with those who made you upset. Don't worry! everything will go back to normal and if not you'll always have the friends in Rubiera to rely on.

<S10/13.12>

<U> My opinion about my text <u> <p> As soon as I saw my text, I felt so amazing that I couldn't believe in such a great note and in a such incredible luck! I had studied quite well for this text, but, before it, I was very terrified and * <FT> * when I saw it, <ft> I thought it was a big damage! I don't know why I haven't mistaked some things; maybe I only felt in that way it could be right.

<T01/13.12>

I don't think luck can play an important part in the final result of such a test. Probably, your guesses were right on a few things but not on the whole test. So, don't feel too much surprised or amazed: you have in all likelihood understood the underlying mechanism. I don't really understand what you mean by "it was a big damage": explain please.

<S10/14.02>

Usually you think there are so many things and events you can or could speak about, but, as you have the possibility to write freely what do you really want, you have immediately no more ideas, your mind and your brain are empty. <p> In these moments, you try to remember everything, all the possible arguments, because you have to make up your mind, <A> but <a> nevertheless none of them seems to be right and suitable for that occasion. This is for me one of these moments: I really don't know what I could write, so I believe the only thing I can speak about is writing. <p> Writing is great and relaxing for me; when I'm tired, upset, sad, nervous....(the list is very long) the only way to escape from this bad mood is taking a piece of paper, <A> in <a> which I can fill all my troubles and doubles. <p> This piece of paper become more and more my "dear fellow", who is able, of course, to understand and "help" me. <p> I often write letters to my friends, but sometimes also to myself: I unite all the worries and anxieties in a little, apparently useless, sheet of paper, and suddenly I feel better, I'm again the usual outgoing and full of joy person.

<T01/14.02>

Of course a "sheet of paper" is not useless. A huge quantity of paper has been filled with all sorts of stories and accounts. I like writing to friends too, and especially reading their answers but I have become very lazy lately and I only read other people's writings. When I receive a letter I'm usually very happy because a letter, a piece of writing is not like a phone call (once it is over, it is over you can only remember the conversation), you can read it as many times as you wish. Keeping a record of one's worries and doubts is a way of rationalizing the world around us. Life is difficult, I mean, to cope with it can be hard depending on the type of person you are, and therefore, writing can help us release tension. And remember that there aren't topics less deserving than others. Everything can be suitable for us to write or read provided it is sincere and truthful.

<S10/14.03>

My free time and I. <p> I usually don't have much free time, because school is very hard and stressful, but, as I have less homework to do, and this happens quite seldom, I adore to relax myself and, of course, to sleep for a long time. If I'm not tired, I love to go out with my friends, especially with Erika, my bosom //del cuore// friend, to have fun together and enjoy ourself. I always go out Saturdays night with my gathering //gruppo//: we like discos very much, but we also amuse ourself in characteristic bierkellers //birrerie// or strange nightclubs. <p> I sometimes go out on Friday night, above all, if a friend of mine is going to sleep by me: we go to a wonderful bierkeller in Rubiera, where I live, called <ITQ> ACHAB <itq>, then we move to a very elegant Cafe' called <ITQ> Il Principe <itq>. <p> Quite often I also meet my companions: we usually opt for a pizzeria, and then we choose an exciting //emozionante// or moving //commovente// film, which can overwhelm //travolgere// and involve //coinvolgere// us. <p> I prefere thrillers or love stories, but I watch with great pleasure classical and dramatic <A> ones <a>, too: it's quite easy to understand I'm a very sensitive and a little bit melancholy //melanconica// person, even if people, that don't really know me, think I must be so outgoing and strong and stubborn //testarda//, and proud //orgogliosa// and persevering and so determined, and this is true, but I'm first of all fragile, and

I only seem to have been made of iron, because my heart is delicate like crystal. <p> In my leisure time I enjoy reading Classicals, listening to music (modern and italian music), running with a friend of mine, Eleonora, and especially doing aerobics; <p> unfortunately I only sometimes can carry out //realizzare// all my plans //progetti//, always because of the school, that prevent //impedire// me from going out during the week, except for Saturdays and <A> a very <a> few Sundays. <p> When I go out on Sundays, I usually go and see my grandmother, so I have the possibility to meet my friends only on Saturdays: this is the reason why Summer it's much more better than Winter: in Summer I have not to go to school, which I'm too often fed up with, and I have at my disposal //disposizione// by far //di gran lunga// much more time to relax and to dedicate to me and my friends.

<T01/14.03>

Well, first of all I'd like to congratulate you on your very fluent piece of writing! It is nice to have so many things to do and so many activities to organize. Be patient, you are definitely going to have more time, more free time, in less than two months. <p> People are made up of contradictions, so I am not surprised at all in learning that you are strong and weak at the same time, resolute but delicate. Everybody has to come to terms with their own instability and lack of harmony but that's how the human mind works. <p> It is important to understand what we are and who we are if we want to feel at ease with ourselves and others. <p> You seem to find no difficulties in revealing yourself and this is undoubtedly a good quality. I hope you are "processing" what I told you the other day, I am not quite sure you can consider the matter the way it simply is, but you can always come to me and talk it over with <U> no <u> preconceived ideas.

<S10/16.05>

It is the end of the schoolyear, and I would like to tell you that...<p> Finally we are in May! <p> The weather is absolutely marvellous, the sun, out of the window, is shining, and my humour is getting more and more better. <p> There is only one thing I would like to tell you: this schoolyer has been really awful! <p> I had the possibility to meet my friends only once a week, and not always "so often", I was forced to give up aerobics, I quarreled with some of my schoolmates, the school was <A> and is still <a> incredibly hard, heavy and oppressive, and, unfortunately, in April, I lost my grandmother, who I still love so much. But this terrible event changed and is incredibly changing me: I'm no more so fragile and so introverted, I'm strong, but, also, happy, joyful, 'cause I love my life, and I've understood that everything can certainly be in my hands, as I've innumerable possibilities, and, if I really want and desire something, I will sure be able to obtain it. <p> Now everything is beautiful, life is beautiful and I can appear at the world without fears.

<T01/16.05>

I'm really sorry for your grand-mother because I know what it is to lose a dear person. All of a sudden, the world around disappears and you are left alone with your distress and grief. But then you realize that life goes on and you've got to adjust to the new situation. I'm happy to know that you have grown stronger from this painful experience and that you are now ready to face your future again. The immediate future cries out 'holidays at last' and I do wish you a happy time.

<S11/13.10>

<WU> One thing I have learned today. <wu> <p> Today I have learned new nouns wich are usefull for all the day and I have understand that many nouns have many <WU> synonimes <wu>

<A> ? <a> wich I saw many times but when I have to searche (cercare) it i find ~~any~~ <A> nessun <a> noun. But all that what I learn during a lection ~~you~~ <A> I <a> forget it in a exame. I don't no why...~~I think I'm~~ Perhaps I am too <WU> nervious <wu> <A> ? <a> (nervosa). <p> Anyway I like read a text in the lection I hear the right pronounsiation and I can learn a lot.

<T01/13.10>

There are indeed so many useful words which would help us in a conversation and as many synonyms, too. If you feel you learn a lot during a lesson, like right pronunciation, and so on maybe the reason why you <A> keep <a> forgetting the new words during a test is anxiety or maybe you just find it hard to memorize these words. <p> I don't know! Try to understand what's going wrong. And if you like reading in English, then I suggest you read the articles analysed in class together during our lessons at home as long as you have memorized the most useful and interesting words so that you won't be so nervous during tests.

<S11/20.10>

<WU> One thing I have learnt today <wu> Today we have seen a reported about siamese twins. After the 1st time, that I have seen the film, I unsterstood nothing. I didn't know that it is so difficult to understand english or american people in the television. But after discussing ~~what the~~ in the lesson what they sad and listening another time the film, I understood more. I learnt to hear exactly to the thing: <p> Because also at home when I watch television I have problems to (seguire) <A> ? <a> so fast all that what they sad. (Soprattutto) in italian. They speak to fast and so I can't understand all. <p> But I think after looking the film to times you (concentri) more and so you learn more.

<T01/20.10>

It is very difficult to understand films or news reports. Reports are even more difficult because journalists have to concentrate the most information in just a few minutes! Besides, English and American English are not easy as far as the pronunciation go. But the more you are exposed to oral and spoken discourse the more you improve your overall linguistic skills. In a few months, you'll probably be able to understand more and follow the whole story. Let me know how it is going.

<S11/22.11>

<WU> What I did last week? <wu> <p> Last week I went to Hong Kong. <p> It was a wonderful experience <A> I feel now 3 days older <a>. I went there with a teacher and eleven students. <p> we enjoyed it very much and we saw a lot of different things. <p> Hong Kong is plain of <A> new <a> skyscrapers that are very high and they are buit with a good structure (struttura). But it has also another part, that is not very rich, where the most piple live. In this part it has old sky scrapers, that are very durty and they caled popular houses. Also people is very different of Italian people.

<T01/22.11>

Why do you feel three days older? What do you mean? Are you exhausted because of the long flight? <p> I know Hong Kong is extraordinary, at least different from what we are used to here in Europe. The people, their culture and food, everything is indeed different. As to the skyscrapers which rise to the sky, I think they are fascinating because they are built on hills and mountains and right beside the lagoon. I'm glad you had the opportunity to visit such exciting city.

<S11/13.12>

<WU> My oppinion about my test <wu> <p> I was very frightened on monday, when I had the text. I thaught, I have learned enough for this test and at home I understood all but when I saw the test I had a black out and I did (confusione) with all that what I have learned. <p> I didn't find a same sentence,

wich I did at home and with the agitation I forget all. <p> I hope that I will do the next test better.

<T01/13.12>

Teachers have different opinion on methodology, but I believe students should understand what really goes on in a language from the point of view of the structure and the underlying mechanism. Once you learn this mechanism you are able to cope with any sentence you want to utter. I can't believe your previous teachers gave you students tests containing the same sentences presented in the exercises. Anyway, try not to get nervous next time because when you are tense you get confused and therefore you make a lot of mistakes. This is my advice.

<S11/14.02>

<WU> My dream <wu> <p> The dream of my life is of course a bit special but if I ~~reali~~ can realise this dream, I will be the happiest person of the world. My dream is travelling "in 80 days" around the world. <p> When I was a child I already dremt to travel a lot and I felt very happy when I went with my parents on vacation. <p> Until now I have travelled a lot but it isn't still enough. I would like to see all countrys of the world. When I will have finished school, I will look for a work in a travel agency, so I will be able to travel as much as I like.

<T01/14.02>

Dreams do not always come true, but your dream seems very feasible to me. You won't probably be able to visit the entire world but you have good chances to see a great many places. When I can go on a trip or leave on vacation I feel the happiest person in the world too, because I love travelling and if I could I would become a professional traveller. I think that you could organize the trip of your life, I mean, the going-around-the-world in 80 days trip at the end of high school when you graduate. You'd better start saving up from right now though! And also your idea of looking for a job in a travel agency seems to be reasonable. When you have finished school you'll have plenty of opportunities to travel around the world both on business or for pleasure, I am more than certain.

<S11/14.03>

<WU> My childhood <wu> <p> <i> I have happy memories of my childhood: When I was a child I lived in a little town near the mountains with a wonderful landscape. All my little friends had always to help their parents at home. On the contrary I was free like a bird. My mother always said, that I had only to do my homework and then just enjoy my childhood. So, I spent most of my time in the wood, playing indians with my friends or I went with my bicycle along the river. Nature was for me a wonderful world to discover.

<T01/14.03>

It really sounds like you had a great time. It is important to go through childhood in the best possible way because, as you certainly know, it is exactly during this period of our life that we build up our idea of the surrounding world and that we fix the terms of our relationship with others. Of course, it is very important for us to understand that life is not always easy otherwise ~~we~~ our disappointment could be unbearable during adulthood. I sincerely hope that the serenity which characterized this important period of your life will help you through the difficult problems you might be confronted with in the future.

<S11/16.05>

"It is the end of the school year and I would like to tell you that..." <p> I hope very much to pass the class. If I pass, I will enjoy my holidays, three wonderfull months of vacacion. I forgot to tell you, that the english language will persecute me. My mother pretends, that I go for a study in England or somewhere else. So perhaps I won't have many problems next year, I hope so. But I assure you, I will spend the rest of my free time with my friends. Certainly <A> I will spend <a> two weeks of those ~~I will~~ with my best friend Regina. We want to camp somewhere in Switzerland! My mind is often in Switzerland. I must see my country as soon as possible. <p> Then, I hope to be allowed to spend also a couple of weeks with my boyfriend. Where? I sill don't know, it will be a surprise. I like surprise!!

<S12/13.10>

"One think I have learned today" <p> Today the lesson was very interesting I undesterdood the use of some verbs (like + ing like + to) and <A> the meaning of <a> some new words like (land take off). the teacher have corrected my homework. I've made some mistakes. Unfortunatly I ~~knon~~ learn that in a week we are doing a classwork. I'm very afraid of it. I hope to do my best. We have read ~~some~~ two articols about Lunda McCurtney's live and the work of a german politic they weren't very interesting I hope to improve my English very fast. I'm not very good at parlare e leggere English.

<T01/13.10>

I know that students do not like to take tests but unfortunately we have to. Have confidence in yourself the more anxious and nervous you'll feel the less concentration you'll have. It is not worth worrying! Not everybody likes the same subjects and topics I'll try to vary the articles we are going to analyze this year together but even if you don't like something try to get the most out of it! You might not be interested in politicians and famous people's lives or the life of Mrs McCartney but who cares?! Just learn the words and the structures so as to become good at speaking and reading!

<S12/20.10>

<U> One think I have learnd today <u> <p> ~~Today~~ I ~~have~~ learned some new words. like surgeon to cheeck in, out. etc. I think that the today lesson was very interisting I enjoyed the video very much. it. tells the story of two- <A> siamese <a> twinse. that under go a surgery operation. the ~~speaker~~ //journalist// of the C.N.N. speak very fast but I have met not ~~very~~ many difficulties. ~~to understend~~ //in understanding// what she ~~was saing~~ //said//. I have leared the use of new structures like ~~how~~ what's the weather like. Unfortunatly today I have made bad figuraccia with her when she asked me if I was an estroverted persona I anwersed ~~you~~ her that I was a narrow minded person. In that moment I feel very stupid. I hope not to do such incredibole mistakes. and to improve my Englirh. So I can realize my dream: travelling around the world

<T01/20.10>

It seems to me that you have learned a lot of new things during the lesson. I don't understand why you should have cut a poor figure! Why should you feel stupid admitting you are narrow-minded? The point is: Are you open-minded or narrow-minded? Everybody is what he/she is. Don't be afraid of being what you are. People have to respect people the way they are.

<S12/15.11>

One thin~~k~~g I'm happy/sad about. <p> I think that friendship it's very important for me. and in this moment I'm sad because I can't go out with my friends very often. In this period I have to study very much and I'm very busy in a millions of things. like school sport. So I hope that the summer will come soon and fast so that I can ~~find~~ set me freem from the strees. of these days. I'm sad too because I'm away from ~~my~~ //the// most important person <A> of my live <a> that now are in different parts of Italy So I hope to see them soon again. but I'm very happy too. In fact I'm going to leave for Barcelona and I thnk this will be a beotuful experience that will me grow up. ~~So now I think only at the~~

<T01/15.11>

Friends are really important especially at your age but, unfortunately, we can't do what we like in life but what we can. You sound very busy with school and sport. If you feel that you ought to dedicate time to studying and practising or training volleyball (am I correct? Maybe it's Elisa who plays volleyball) then you should rightly take some time away from your friends. I think it is a sign of maturity to be able to set a few limits to ourselves. In truth, you will have plenty of time to spend with your friends and be totally relaxed next summer. I know, there is still a long way to go before it can get warm and sunny again but after so much waiting you will feel more gratified.

<S12/22.11>

What did I last week? <p> Last week I went to Barcellona. this is a mervollous country but I prefer Italy. We left on Thuesday and we spent five days in this Spanish city. I have enjoyed myself very much because I have knoun in a more specifical way the characteristichs of my school friends, because I have visited the monuments of a fantastics place. <p> But there have been some problems with a schoolmate. so I feel very sad. When we had quarreld with him becausse I think she is a really important person for myself I hope that our friendship will grow up after this experience. the funniest moment of the day was the night. We haven't never slept very much. But the morning was really catastophical because I felt very tired and I wasn't very interesting in the historical espects. of Barcellona. Really speaking in some moment I was very melanconic because I was away from my friends and my parents. But this wasn't very important for the final results of the trip, that were eccelent.

<T01/22.11>

I have never been to Barcelona, so I couldn't say whether it is a marvelous city or not but I guess that five days (Tuesday through Saturday) are enough to have an idea. It is always interesting to get to know people in a more specific way, I mean thoroughly and better, because then you know who you are dealing with. I hope that what happened during the trip will not have unpleasant consequences on the general atmosphere of the class. It is not always possible to be friends and nice to people but it would be much more desirable if we succeeded in this. But I trust you will solve your problem: after all quarreling is quite normal in life! I know that students never sleep during school trips but again it is your trip and you should enjoy yourselves as much as you can except that you should polite all the time and respect other people's needs (for example the other guests of the hotel who want to relax and sleep).

<S12/13.12>

What I think about my test. <p> I was a little bit angry when I saw my note because I have studied a lot and my result don't rapresent my hard work. I have made foolish mistake and that is why I fell afraid when I saw the withe paper of my test, I fell afraid of doing something wrong and this regullary happens. I must change myself and my relashionship with the school I must become more sure of myself and conut on my posibility. In this way I can make beiter results and everything will go better I have fand this test a little bit difficoult but because it was made of long exercises with some diffucuts phrase. Next time I hope to do my best.

<T01/13.12>

I remember that when I was still in school and a teacher would hand out tests and papers I felt very insecure too. I think it is quite natural to have doubts about oneself. Nonetheless, it is important to keep the lack in self-confidence and the resulting feeling of precariousness under control. <p> If you study hard, if you think you have understood the teacher's difficult explanations, there's no point in feeling frustrated and insecure. I'm sorry the grade you got did not reflect your efforts. As you say, work on your relationship with school and tests and you'll be more gratified when you find out that it pays to be agressive.

<S12/24.01>

<BO> THE SCHOOL <bo> <p> I'm very fed up with the school. In this moment I have a lot to study I and I haven't one moment for my self. But what makes me angry is that our theachers aren't sadifate of our work <p> I give everything to school. <p> I have lost my spare time. <p> I can't stay with my friends more than 1 our a week but this is <A> int <a> important. <p> Fourtunatly there is the summer that can set you free from the stress of the rest of time. <A> But <a> I can't find right that nobody is happy of what our class do. It' very difficult going on thinking that the other aren't sadisfate enough and don't recognise your hard work. I know that studying is very important and I do it with plaasure but I hope that our theachers will ~~be more~~ understand our problems, ~~be more give mor~~ giving more attention to their behaviars

<T01/24.01>

Oh, oh! This sounds like a reproach! <p> I'm very happy you have made the point crystal-clear in your journal. I appreciate direct and sincere persons, and maybe I have already told you this. Well, first of all, let me tell you that you can't generalize too much, and also that when we teachers complain and scold you students, we refer to a general trend and, therefore, those of you who identify their own personal situation with our words will have to work harder than others. So, don't take every single word we say as directed to you. Secondly, I have the impression the class has a hard time understanding that what you are doing is something which has to become part of yourselves, of your personalities, something which can make you better persons professionally and as human beings. This is what I ask of you. This is what everybody else wants. Show us some interest, some involvement, show us that you are studying because you like it, because you want it, not just because your parents want you to do so. <p> In conclusion, what am saying is: not everybody is working hard as the rest of the class. Not everybody is processing the information we give in the right way. Not everybody takes school seriously (so why are they there? do they need help and support? just ask but don't play tricks on us) I want to be able to face a class, to work with students who co-operate, collaborate and who regard the teacher as a source of information they can draw from to improve. The problem is that you students see us as "the great enemy on earth". I don't want you to agree with me, just think about it and consider things from different points of view. I'm glad you have understood the importance of the journal and I'm sure you will realize that it is not true that we are not satisfied with you!

<S12/14.02>

Dear Prof Morini <p> thank for your answer by that I have understood <A> a <a> lot of thinks. I recognise that the job of a teacher is very hard and difficult. When you find some students that aren't interested in what you are explaining. <p> I sincerly think you are a very intelligent teacher (i don't say this to increase my note) but some people in our school aren't (unfurtunatly) so qualificated. they have a bad relashionship with their student they prefer only teaching and seem strict people. this is the worst point in the way of teaching of a ~~people~~ person. I don't like the terrific atmosphere when there are some people. But it doesn't matter! Nothing can be perfect.! But in this letter I wouldn't like to speak only about school, it's so borning do you agree I want to tell you something about my self. I'm living ~~in~~ a terrible moment. I'm stressfull. and confuse. I'm sad <U> yes <u>! I don't like myself and I want to change! In fact I'm a cheerful person but when I find some diffucult everythink changend and become horrible. But this isn't important. What makes me extremely angry is San Valentino. Everybody gives you a present. it's the day of the love. annd I'm done. <U> Beatiful <u> I hope to find a boyfriend very soon But I think it's impossible. who wants me? It' doesn't matter I thnk you have understood I'm a little bit tragic person. I would like that you suggest me a place where I can study and improve my English. I don't know if I'm going abroad this sumer but before ~~I~~ spenting 3 mounth at the ~~side~~ sea sides I would like to study in a demanding way English. Thanks Francesca

<T01/14.02>

I'd like to apologize first of all for being so late in answering this time but I have been very very busy lately. Anyway, two words about school. It's true strict educators are not liked and loved by students. For the same reason I disliked a few teachers when I was in high school because I considered them too detached from our world. The most important thing, however, is a teacher's culture and "know-how": a teacher must have the ability to teach and communicate his/her subject-matter and involve his/her students if possible. Besides being skilled and competent, it would be very nice if he/she could be an interesting person as well, open-minded, happy to share experiences with students. But, you see, people have different natures and therefore you'll have to cope with different situations. OK, as we don't want to get bored by school problems, let's switch to the next issue. I do hope that in the meantime you have overcome the difficult state you were in. I hope you are not as stressed and confused as before! I don't understand why you don't like yourself!? Come on, you have to learn not only to accept others but above all to accept yourself "everything included". If you don't like your way of becoming depressed and feeling horrible when facing difficulties then I say "Yes Francesca, make an effort to change a little at least". Well, firstly you could adopt my philosophy: "If there are problems, there must be ways of solving them". Remember, generally speaking you can always get <A> out <a> of a terrible situation; it could be painful but you can. Secondly, I have the impression you do not have a high opinion of yourself: you don't like yourself because you don't love yourself enough! Try to consider the situation from the outside as if you were judging someone else's. What's wrong with you? You are young and pretty, intelligent and outgoing, you can make friends easily, you are allowed to travel abroad, etc... Don't tell me the problem is this "missing boy" you can't find. Maybe in the meantime you have met someone. But who cares if you haven't. You will have so many opportunities during your lifetime! Enjoy your freedom as long as you can. I'm sure your mom thinks the same, ask her! <p> As to the summer trip, there are many organizations proposing a great many ideas, places and programs. I had a look at the booklet you gave me and I did find a few interesting things. We'll be talking about that when we meet.

<S12/14.03>

Dear Prof Morini. <p> How are you <p> I'm fine thanks. but today I'm little bit melanconic. ~~Mayb~~ Maybe it's the weather that is too sunny and makes me think about the summer. that I hope will come soon again. Finally I will say <ill> I'm free again I will spend more time with my friends and give a hand to the people who need~~s~~ help. I <U> have lots to do! <u> the thing wich makes me happier is that. I could see again the people whom I consider the most important of my live. The friends I have known since I was a child that live in different parts of Italy but I have the chance to meet again each summer and during the holidays like christmas and Easter I have shared with them my most important experiences and our relationship is very strong I think I am a lucky person to know such wunderful friends Today I'm a little bit sad My friends have gone to the disco and I have to stay at home for studying history! What a bad thingh But it doesn't matter. I knou the school is very important. for the growing-up of a boy and I will have the oppurtunity to know new friends to enjoy myself when I will be older. I have got a dream in life I would like to become a psychologist to understand me more Sometimes I think I'm a strange person. Because I love to have lots of friends. but when I'm among the people I feel bad. out of place. I think I'm an unsure person. who gives too importance to the other's opinion. To realize my dream I will do all my best. and I will sacrifice every <U> thing my friends. ~~my hap~~ my family <u> what do you think about it? <p> Bye Bye <p> by <p> Francesca.

<T01/14.03>

Dear Francesca, <p> I'd like to apologize for being so late in answering but I've had a terrible time myself. <p> I like your idea of becoming a psychologist. Personally I consider "the experts of the mind" very intelligent and cultivated people. And of course very sensitive, too! Undoubtedly your "dream", which I find feasible indeed, is linked to your desire of knowing yourself better. You feel strange and different but you are not! Everybody loves being surrounded by friends and people because, remember, man is primarily a social animal. We need to live in a community and we need to interact with other people, otherwise we will psychologically die. We need, in other words, to feel alive! But of all the possible good reasons we have to make friends there is another: we need people to feel comforted and reassured, we need to be psychologically supported. So, you want to be with friends because you feel (and you actually are) insecure. However, when you are with all these friends you are as unhappy as before because you don't get the answers you are looking for. My advice is: look inside yourself for self-assurance! you can't expect people to fill the gaps. At least, not always and not on all occasions. Make a list of all the good things you could be proud of (and you have many), look at the future as something you can help build up. And smile! you are so young, you can virtually do anything. <p> Naturally, my "yelling" is of no use unless you are fully convinced of this. <p> Maybe there is something you are afraid to acknowledge openly, you don't want to avow yourself. Think about what you consider being your source of deep and profound frustration. <p> then we'll talk about this again! See you soon and be happy!

<S13/20.10>

One thing I have learned today <p> I have learned what Alice is really like and I always hate her. <p> I’m not so bad in English as I thought. The American female journalists aren’t so pretty as the italian journalists.

<T01/20.10>

First of all, where is the previous piece of writing? Well, I’m glad you don’t lack self-confidence. and that you have checked your skills and abilities. <p> Not everybody feels he/she is good at something. The American journalist you saw might not be so pretty according to your standards but I can assure you that CNN has some very good-looking anchor-women even better-looking than the Italian ones.

<S13/15.11>

One thing I’m happy/sad about <p> I’m happy because tomorrow at midday I will be in Barcelona <p> I’m happy because Barcelona is a beautiful city <p> I’m happy because I thingk we’are going to have a lot of fun <p> I’m sad because we’are going to visit a lot of museums. <p> I’m sad because I think Italy is going to lose the match

<T01/15.11>

I'm sorry but this time your prediction is not correct. <p> Italy won the match last night. See, I don't really care about soccer, actually I hate it, but I read the paper this morning. I glanced at a headline and I think they were saying something about how great the players were!

<S13/22.11>

What I did last week <p> Last week I went to Barcelona with the school. <p> I enjoyed myself very ~~m~~ much, because ~~it's~~ Barcelona is a beautiful city and my compagni ~~were~~ are not so bad as I thought. The ~~professors~~ professors were very nice too, and they were never too hard with us.

<T01/22.11>

Was this the first school trip you were on? I know, last year you did not join the company. Maybe now that you know that your classmates are not that bad you'll take part in every trip.

<S13/13.12>

What I think about my test <p> I think that it has been //was// a very difficult test. <p> So I'm happy for my note, although I suppose I have done a lot of stupid errors.

<T01/13.12>

It was a difficult test but if you do the same easy exercises over and over again you'll never improve and you'll never learn how to solve difficult tasks. Although it was a difficult test you did pretty good on it all the same!

<S14/13.10>

ONE THING I HAVE LEARNED TODAY <p> today I haven't learned so much new but I'm happy to have understand better some specific situations of the language. For example I think I'm more sure about the clase between the ing form or the infinitive without to. Of course I have learnd new words and that's really important, I think, because you can speak more fluently. I notice that when I am at home and sometimes I try to speak only English and I see that it's very, very difficult to find an expressions that can ~~esprimere~~ be ~~espressa~~ <A> say <a> by <A> an only <a> word. Anyway I notice that in this way I can know if I improve my English and I'm happy when at the end of my conversation I could say always something more. Infact I'm really very happy to study English, I like it so much but sometimes I'm afraid that I could never be as good as I'd like.

<T01/13.10>

The acquisition of a foreign language is a complex process but it is not impossible and I'm sure you will succeed because you like the language. Of course there are always so many new things - words, structures - to learn you can never say you know a language perfectly not even your first language! <p> I think you are referring to the different use of the -ing form and the infinitive without to after sense verbs. Keep practising the language at home it's good exercise! The more you ~~make~~ speak aloud the more you'll be able to speak more fluently.

<S14/20.10>

<U> One thing I have learned today <u> <p> Today I'm a bit tired and perhaps I have think a bit of something else, but I was very happy to watch a report on TV because I love listening to people, who speak English. <p> Last year we ~~haven'~~ didn't watch lots of TV at school and that worried me because I think it's important listen to spoken English, too. you can learn new words and structures and you can try to understand other people's ideas and opinions, too. If I have to be sincere, I'm a bit afraid of the next classwork because I learned new things and I have to study them very well, I hope it will be not so bad.

<T01/20.10>

It is important to listen to people speaking in English to get used to the different pronunciation so that when we are exposed to the spoken language we can better recognize the sounds. <p> Sometimes we know what words mean if we see them printed down on paper but we get confused and are lost when these same words are pronounced. <p> You don't have to be afraid of the test. Of course we have to do new things to improve. If we just did the same old things you would not learn anything!

<S14/15.11>

One thing I'm happy/sad about. <p> Today I feel a bit nervous because the day before I have to go abroad I'm always afraid of the flight, of the illness and of losting something important. <p> So I'm a bit happy of course because I was told that Barcellona is a really beautiful town and spanish people are always happy and friendly with everybody they meet or speak to, but I'm a bit sad, too. Infact my best friend, Alice, is now in Hong Kong on another schooltrip and she can't spend this holiday with me and that's really strange for me, because she was always near me ~~we~~ when I travelled abroad. <p> I hope that the last time we will be together again because when I've got a little problem, and I think you always have one when you are far from home, she helps me really happly. I hope it will be a good holiday and I will enjoy myself very, very much

<T01/15.11>

I'm usually nervous too when I have to fly because although I love taking planes I once had an emergency landing and I'll never forget how frightened I was not to get back home safe & sound. Fortunately, we can consider planes the safest way to travel nowadays and therefore we should feel comfortable "sitting on the clouds". The fact that Alice is not with you this time, though sad you might be, could be a way to test yourself and how independent you are. <p> After all, there'll be many other occasions to spend a vacation with your best friend. I'm sure you are already planning a summer trip!

<S14/22.11>

What I did last week <p> Last week I went to Barcelona with my friends and I enjoyed myself very, very much. <p> It was a wonderful trip because I could know my friends really better and now I'm happy to know more about them: their problems, their happynesses and their family. During these trip I've learnt to be always sincere with the people because sometimes a word thet we don't say can become another one and a little thing become quickly a really big problem. <p> I'm to be really sincere We ~~haven't~~ didn't sleep much, we spoke a lot about our problems and that was wonderful because I've known that my little problems are also other people's problems. It happened also a spiacevole thing, we were in a really difficult situation because each of us were against the other ones and at the end we were angry for something that we didn't understand so much. Now we are friends again and perhaps in the future we will be more uniti and friendly.

<T01/22.11>

It's true that when you spend a lot of time with people you get to know them better but on the other hand you can have arguments and quarrels too. Problems, joys; one should be able to cope with all that trying to support and understand one's friends in all sincerity and honesty. <p> But very often, and that's the sad part, good faith is not enough. <p> I don't know what happened during the trip but I'm glad you are all back together and friends again.

<S14/13.12>

What I think about my test> <p> OK, now I have to speak about my test, that's very difficult because I don't want to write something wrong, but you have just said that you are extremely tolerant, so I am going to be really sincere. <p> This test was very difficult, I think, and I was really afraid of my note. Now I'm happy to have taken an 7+ but I think that if you want to improve yourself you have to impose to yourself always something more and that is what I want to do, so I think is too less. It's right that I have been studying English only for two years but that is not so important, especcially because of my love for this language (SOMETIMES I DREAM THAT I AM TEACHING ENGLISH AT SCHOOL AND I AM SO A GOOD TEACHER!!!). What makes me angry is that I don't do any mistakes in the difficult sentences, instead some easy one seems to be really too difficult for me. I hope, I will improve or better I'm sure, that I will improve (perhaps I don't know what is possible and what is not possible.

<T01/13.12>

Elisa, what you have written is extremely beautiful! First of all, I appreciate your openness and sincerity but if on the one hand I admit the test was difficult, on the other hand I think students can only improve and learn by trying to solve difficult tasks. I have such a good opinion on you as a person and a student and I have absolutely no doubts on the fact that you'll improve your grades a lot. Probably, you have to get used to my way of presenting the language. Don't worry, I'm sure your motivation will "yield great satisfaction". Also, I'd like to congratulate you on your dream. It is so beautiful to be a teacher even if students criticize us!

<S14/25.01>

<U> OPEN JOURNAL <u> <p> <i> Now, it's 2.45 and I've already had my lunch. I'm really very tired and I've got a terrible headache but I can't go sleeping because I have to study really a lot and I've not the opportunity to have an hour of wonderful rest. <p> I hope this week'll end really very quickly because I have been studying very hard for two weeks and my forces bigin to

end, my marks are quite good and I can be quite satisfied of myself but I know that I can do better especially in some subjects like maths or German. <p> Sometimes I would have better marks in every subject but I know that I'm a human person like the other ones and I'm not a computer and I can have bad days, too. <p> It's incredible how English writing can relax because now I <A> feel <a> a little bit better and I know it's time to stop because 10 minutes are already gone and the other homeworks are waiting for me. Good luck, Elisa!!!

<T01/25.01>

It is great to hear that you enjoy writing and that this kind of activity helps you relax. I'm very happy about that. Well, if you feel like writing, you can write as long as you want, I'll be glad to read anything you wish to tell me. Back to school work, I know the past few weeks have been just crazy. The pace has been hectic and school work exhausting for you kids ~~and~~ as well as for us! I do think you can be satisfied with your grades and proud of yourself too because your end-of-term report is very good. I understand you would like to excel in everything but it's not always possible and you don't have to worry about it. Besides studying so hard you should be able to appreciate life, too. Take some time to recover physical and psychological strength and you will feel better. Do you remember the article about the importance of being on vacation?

<S14/16.02>

<U> OPEN JOURNAL <u> <p> the article "THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ON VACATION" was really very interesting and I read it so many times that I'm sure I know all the words very, very well. I agree with the writer because sometimes it's impossible to do everything perfectly and after an exhausting period a rest is extremly necessary. <p> that's why I practise sport ~~too~~ during my short free time and I try to enjoy myself with

my friends on the weekends. I think sport is a marvellous form of exercise both phisically or spiritually. you can relax you and your body and your mind are far from the school, you can know the members of your ~~time~~ team really better and especially their thoughts and opinions are important to have a general idea about something in which you are interested. <p> What's more I try to find also a couple of hours per week to help little children in doing their homeworks and that it's getting more and more important for me. In fact it's incredible how you feel happy and important helping the others and giving them an helpful hand. <p> Perhaps I have the opportunity to be involved in all these occupations also because I haven't got a boyfriend and so when I go out I can meet much more my friends and I can choose personally and especially freely what I want to do. <A> But <a> Sometimes I would prefer to be less free, have much responsabilities and why not have a boyfriend. <p> In fact if someone doesn't try he can never be sure about what he thinks. <p> P.S: thanks so much for your disponibility and for having had this wonderful idea of the open journal.

<T01/16.02>

I think that the open journal, well this activity we have named open journal, is interesting because it serves a double purpose. First of all, by writing about ourselves we have a chance of getting to know each other better and our relationship should consequently improve. Secondly, this activity should help you refine your English and build up new structural knowledge. In short, I am convinced that both parties will profit from the journal. It is good exercise. It is true that teaching is a way of helping others. You help others (or you assist others) in the acquisition of different skills and abilities. And that can be very rewarding. <p> I understand that you have a teacher-like nature, and if I am not mistakening you would like to become "one of us". Good! <p> I'm glad you have all sorts of interests and occupations. A busy life keeps you alive. Of course, there is no need to exaggerate otherwise you'd better make sure you have friends ready to give you a helping hand to you!!!

<S14/13.03>

<U> OPEN JOURNAL <u> Today it's Sunday and you know Sunday is always a beautiful day, you can relax yourself, do the things you like to do, you have to prepare <A> yourself <a> to a new harassing week and if there is sonny you have the possibility to go out and enjoy yourself with your friends or your family, too. It's partly sonny, now, and I'm happy because this afternoon I can meet ~~my~~ some of my friends, go for a walk with them and laugh a lot because most of them, especially the boys, are extremely funny and happy when they are all together. <p> At the moment I'm having my breakfast and after that I'm going to help my mother because she fells not very well, at 10.30 I think I will go to see my friends' volley-ball match, it seems to be really interesting because the other team is told to be quite strong. I'm not tired although I have got up quite early this morning ~~and~~ but last week I was ill and I slept very, very much so I think I have slept enough for a long period. <p> OK, Now I think it's time to begin the jobs around the house, I'm generally not so happy about them but when my mother ask me some help that means that she fells really not well, so I'd be a bad girl if I answer her "NO".

<T01/13.03>

I'd like to take the opportunity of this journal writing activity to tell you how much I enjoyed reading your paragraph about "A good friend". I think you've expressed your ideas in a clear and logical structure using good English. I hope you'll go on studying and loving the language the way you have demonstrated to love it so far and wish you to always improve and widen your knowledge of it. <p> As to what you wrote in your previous journal, I understand your Sundays are quiet and relaxing. You don't always need to be on the go to release tension and anxiety. Some people do organize activities all the time in the hope of leaving behind their daily frustrations but often end up by feeling even more tense. I guess one should just decide what is best for him/herself!

<S14/16.05>

IT'S THE END OF THE SCHOOL AND I' D LIKE TO TELL YOU THAT... <p> It's extremely difficult to ~~say~~ <A> explain<a> what happens during a long school year in 10 minutes I'd say it's nearly impossible but it's a good idea <A> and an interesting habit <a> to try to surface the most difficult problems, so I'm going to tell you what is my opinion dealing with my 3th FORM. <p> This was a very hard and difficult year. I had to solve many problems conserning with health and school, too because I began to study new subjects and to learn the main things of every subject in a different way, that is with my brain and not only with my memory I also started to study foreign literature and it's very hard to express in a simple and correct way very sofisticated and difficul facts or events that took place millions and millions of years ago, when the people had a completly different way of thinking and mentality. <p> A very positive aspect of this school year was the atmosphere (I'm not sure about the spelling) in my class, in the last two years we were partly divided and we didn't enjoy ourselves together and I think that was negative because everyone thought about herself/himself without having any social interest. This year the things went better and when we had an opportunity to meet out of the school we didn't lost time and we went out all together to conclude it was an interesting year and I learnt lots of things but I'm so tired that I'd like to say: "For this year I'm fed up with the school." (If I have to be sincere I wrote for 15 minutes because ~~my brother~~ when I was writing my brother arrived and she ~~spoke~~ <A> told <a> me ~~about~~ something interesting).

<T01/16.05>

Well, I really like the account you have given me about this past school year. I understand from your words that it was extremely educational as school helped you both to expand your mind and to deepen social ties as well. I can't say much about the atmosphere in the class because I was not one of your teachers in the beginning years; what I can state though, is that you are a nice class but altogether (I am just giving a general opinion) you need to understand and respect people more, not only teachers (who are the "hated" ones) but also and especially students. Anyway...Don't worry about the time! You can write for as long as you want, I'll be always happy to read my students' opinions, thoughts and feelings. By the way, this was an interesting year for me too; in fact, I must admit that the journal experience has been most rewarding because it showed me a different way to teach and to be in touch with the class.

<S15/11.10>

Write down one think that you have larned today. <p> Today I have learned a lot of new words and expressions. I have read an article about India and It was very interesting because it said a lot of things I didn't know, such as the problem of bored tigers and that there are too many tourist going to see theme.

<T01/11.10>

It is sad to admit that tourism is bad for the environment because it is so interesting to travel. Fortunately, we can also learn things from articles, papers and books.

<S15/18.10>

Today I have learned a very interesting think I didn't know about Medieval Drama: the use of allegory in order to personificate what was happening inside the actor. I didn't know that the personification of unreal thinks, such as Death, Temptations.

Luck were used in this time. I think Medieval Drama is interesting with all its allegorys and its sense of man's isolantion before the death.

<T01/18.10>

It was necessary to personify abstractions otherwise the audience wouldn't have gotten the message. During the Middle Ages, allegories were widely used in literature also because you could not express your opinions freely. In fact, some authors used allegory in order to refer to something different from what stated in their works. In Medieval Drama, allegory served the purpose of turning abstract, concealed ideas into real, clear and definite concepts.

<S15/20.10>

One thing I'm still wandering about <p> I know that the relationship betweene parents and children sometimes is difficult, but I don't understand why my father needs to speak aloud when he isn't agree with me. We can discuss in a civil way... I suppose it's quite normal... but he always needs to urlare and than he stops speaking and goes in an other room to watch TV. And I stay alone in the kitchen. Not very nice!

<T01/20.10>

Parents-children relationships can be very hard to manage. When you live with somebody it's normal to argue and have different points of view. I understand you don't find it nice when your father shouts and yells at you. Maybe you can try to talk to him. Why don't you explain to him that you would rather discuss things nicely? You should also consider the fact that perhaps your father is short of temper and loses his patience easily. You know, my father was just like your father! He used to yell and shout all the time when there was no need for it. He improved and became more reasonable when I got married.

<S15/22.11>

One think I'm happy/sad about. <p> Today it's my birthday. I'm 18. I know I'm becoming old... I'm very happy and I'm organizing a party that I hope will be funny and an occasion to spend time together and have fun. Yesterday my parents and I have prepared the room where the party will take place. I am very happy and even my parents have enjoied themselves in helping me. <p> I don't think something will change in my life, and maybe it seems stupid for an adult to see someone so happy to have birthday but for me it's special because since I was 16 I have never had a birthday with both my parents and this year I have it. So it's wanderful!

<T01/22.11>

It's not stupid to celebrate birthdays! I love to party and celebrate on my birthdays. When I turned 30 (<U> I <u> am getting old not you!) I celebrated for 3 days in a row and since then I have done the same. Maybe when I turn 40 I will start partying for a whole week!!! I hope your birthday party was a success and that you enjoyed yourself very much, also with your parents. Happy birthday then! Sorry for the delay.

<S15/19.01>

This Saturday I went to the disco with my friends. I enjoied myself very much even if there was a lot of people and at 11 o'clock the disco was already empty and some friends who came later couldn't enter. <p> I don't like the disco when is so empty because you can't dance, you can't sit and if you walk... you are died. Consuelo and I still go to the disco because is the only place we can go to meet our friends. My parents aren't very happy because they think discos are dangerous and there everybody can find drugs, spirits... but discos aren't dangerous at all if you don't want it. Drugs and spirits can be found everywhere, you don't need to wait for Saturday night in a disco to find drugs or alcohol.

<T01/19.01>

To tell you the truth, I can see both points of view. On the one hand, you feel responsible for your own life and strong enough to decide what's wrong and right for you. On the other hand, your parents worry and are anxious you might fall a prey of unpleasant situations. You know, the world has got so terribly unsafe. You can't trust people, you never know what's on people's mind. It's really sad. But going back to drugs and spirits, it is true that no matter where you go and who you are with if you want to try you will try drugs and drink alcohol. If, instead, you are not curious or interested that won't happen. See, I personally hate discos (I used to go to discos when I was your age though) the music is too loud, you can't talk to friends; it's too crowded, you bump into people whenever you move; however, it's hard to give opinions. Think for yourself and assure your parents you are going to be ok! One thing I don't understand is: if the disco was empty why didn't the other friends join you?

<S15/07.02>

Now I'm in my room, listening to the radio. I feel...exhausted, depressed, I don't know. <p> I'd like to be a little ~~child~~ baby and to ~~be~~ live in a golden~~-plac~~ palace, miles away from the whole word. I know that my problems aren't very "big", but for me have bad marks at mathematics is a real disaster. I don't know how to tell <A> it <a> to my father and how to give him my schoolreport. What will he say to me? Oh God, I hope he wan't yell (urlare?) too much, because when he yells I begin to cry and...ooh, why ~~I'm no can~~ //am I not// able to be good at maths?

<T01/07.02>

Your opening lines remind me of Doctor Faustus' wish "to be changed into little water drops". Yes, it's true, when you feel desperate you wish you could unwind the clock and seek refuge in childhood. But it would be unreal. You have to face the present and not to lose sight of the future. So, if you have a hard time understanding maths, just explain that to your father or find a way to improve. We can't be perfect, there will always be a situation (a subject, in your case) where we fail. It's not a disaster, it's not horribly shameful as you may think. And I told you some time ago to talk the yelling question through with your father, otherwise you'll cry forever!

<S15/07.02>

I'd like to ask you about people and specially about "friends". Do you think they feel a particular joy to "walk over" the heart of other people? And do friends feel good or happy to narrate all your "secrets" to the only people you didn't wanted to know it? I can't really stand this thing, that <WU> way of live <wu> is hypocrite and despicable. I mean, if you think someone has, for example, a orrible dress, why do you say it's nice? Shut up, it's better! And if you know that someone can't stand another person, why many people need to tell it and make them quarrel? I think this is wrong, we should try to make everybody happy by helping them to <WU> get on well <wu> //andare d'accordo// with eachother. Are you agree with me? Has a friend ever been so bad with you? What did you do?

<T01/07.02>

Well, the first thing you have to understand, Emanuela, is that human beings are complex. Man's psychological structure is so complicated that even psychoanalysts don't know exactly how our mind works. Anyway, there are people who are certainly insincere and hypocritical (I hate hypocrisy). You also meet people who take pleasure in making somebody suffer or are just happy to see others' feelings hurt or plans frustrated. Again, jealousy and envy: a wide range of feelings indeed. I don't really know what to say; I am aware of the problem and when I deal with people who are psychologically "weak" I just don't pay attention and put up with them. Friends. I carefully choose the people with whom I want to have a close relationship. Maybe I once had a jealous friend. That was many years ago. But I tell you, it was HER problem not mine. In conclusion, I think that getting along with people or friends is not always easy but it is not impossible. Consider that behaviour and demenour are determined by psychological situations which can sometimes be serious. Human beings are made up of contradictory feelings: You can't help that.

<S16/11.10>

WRITE DOWN ONE THING THAT YOU HAVE LEARNED TODAY <p> I learned some new words of the article I'm very proud to know so many words and I also learned that, sometimes my imagination runs wrong. I haven' learned so much this morning because I'm very tired because yesterday was an exhausting day

<T01/11.10>

I appreciate your being so sincere. In fact, it's not always possible to be performant. Try to catch up and study the article when you are more "awake" and "in shape".

<S16/18.10>

One thing I've learned today <p> I've learned that I hate philosophy and especially St. Agostino Later I've learned That Medieval Drama is extremely boring. But I've also had some fun talking with my schoolmates during the change of hour. Thank you for the consigli you gave me last week. I read the article another time and finally I actually understood it. I think this /work/ is interesting because so we learn how to express our ideas without being afraid of what you think of me. But why do we have to make a schoolwork about grammar? I don't like it also if I have to learn it. Be sure, I'm learning it for the test.

<T01/18.10>

I can imagine Medieval Drama or Saint Augustine are not exactly the topics in which you are interested but my opinion is that everything you are learning during these years will open up your mind. After all you're not studying book-keeping but you don't have to agree with me of course. I'm happy you have appreciated my advice. Also, we will analyze a lot of other articles and that's exactly what I wanted to do last year but we had no time at all. You knew (you = the whole class) so little English! But now you have improved a lot; that's why I have to check next Monday!

<S16/20.10>

One thing I'm still woundering about. <p> I think I understood everything we made today, I didn't understand ~~who~~ the end of Arthur the ex-husband of Catherine of Aragon but after the explication I have it clear in my mind. I'm still woundering about the bell-rings (never on time) and I often ask me why don't the school buy an electronical bell-ring. I don't understand, too, why do we always have to make so long and expensive trips. I'm afraid <A> not to go <a> but I already have to pay the phone bill and I don't want to spend other money.

<T01/20.10>

There's nothing to understand about poor Arthur. He just died and his brother Henry married his wife Catherine. Probably, the reason why bells are never on time is because Mrs. Silla is alone and can't just do everything. I'm not sure I can answer your questions exhaustively because you are asking yourself too many questions! So, why doesn't the school buy an electronic device? I just don't know! And what about trips? I don't know Ask the principal! She has organized the trip. As to phone bills, well, I had the same problem when I was living at home. My father used to threaten me he would have the phone company to cut off the line!!! I hope your happy with my explanations!

<S16/22.11>

One thing I'm happy or sad about <p> I'm very sad because tomorrow I'm going to be asked in Italian, so I've to study this afternoon and I don't have so much fun studying Guicciardini also because I was home when she explained it. I'm sad because I've to afford (affrontare?) an operation in the next 8 months or less. I'm frightened by operations. I'm happy because Saturday night I had lot of fun in the disco and met some of old friends that I didn't meet for almost a year.

<T01/22.11>

If I were you I would not get depressed because of school work. After all it is your job and I hope you like it. Unfortunately, there are lots of things we do not like, but it will always be like that! So, the sooner you start coping with that the happier you become. I'm sorry to hear about your operation. I hope it is nothing serious. Don't worry too much and be serene when you face it. I have a hard time believing that such an outgoing person like you can get intimidated by life!

<S16/19.01>

Journal <p> I'm incredibly tired today. I've slept for an hour but I'm always tired. It's a week that I always wake up at 6 and then I can't sleep any more. Maybe it's because of the end of the semester but I can't afford another one (I'm always telling so every year) I just hope the weather will better otherwise I fall in depression, and don't study any more.

<T01/19.01>

At the end of the semester everybody is exhausted but that's part of the game you are playing. And of course, after a week you have been waking up so early no wonder you feel tired and worn out. Before the Christmas break something very similar happened to me too. I would wake up around five or six in the morning and couldn't go back to sleep again. Even worse, I could not easily fall asleep at bedtime. I was obsessed by school, texts, corrections. Don't think that this can only happen to students. Well, after the semester is over, we will (both sides, I mean) slow down a little so as to recover some energy for the final rush. And smile, spring is coming!

<S16/07.02>

JOURNAL <p> Note please that I'm writing on a big piece of paper! You ended your answer to my last journal, writing that spring is coming: But it doesn't seem to be so. I'm happy to know that I'm not the only one depressed in this "classroom". I knew this morning that you have a horse called Silla (this name remembers something to me!) I have horses and I rode for 2 or 3 months. But then I broke a leg and so my mother's forbidden to me to ride anymore. I'm worried about the paragraph you are checking but I'm sure that I've done it at my best. Do you believe me? I hope so! I like this kind of work (journals) because they show you another face of your students (of me in this case) and show me another face of the teacher. I'm thinking about writing a book. I'm writing poems whet<A>h<a><U>e<u>r in Italian and in English and I think they are very good! Now, I've to go because tonight there's a party by me and I've to help my mother. Bye! If I have time tomorrow I'll write you another piece of journal.

<T01/07.02>

I'm a little late this time. So late that the weather is warm again and does seem to hold. When it is so nice and warm I feel happier like most people, I guess. I am also more relaxed because the first semester is over and we are not so overwhelmed as before. Yes, my father's horse's name is Silla and when one utters this name the first person we think of is the school caretaker! In this case, it's a horse! So even if Silla reminds you of our Silla, don't think of her as a horse! Horses are very nice but I am afraid of riding because I fell down to the ground - on pebbles!!! - when I was 10 and I decided not to ride any more. <p> The idea of the journal is great, I think, because this activity serves a double purpose. First of all, you practise the language in a spontaneous way and therefore become more fluent. Secondly, we can reveal different facets of our personality and discuss topics we could never deal with during a lesson. I claim that a teacher's role is not just that of imparting notions and teaching rules. Teachers are human beings and as such can communicate something more to their students. We are not used to considering this kind of relationship, this sort of "friendship" which can develop out of people who share a common experience. But maybe in time, teacher-student rapports will improve. I'd like to read your book or poetry. I think it's a wonderful and creative idea. Don't give up! <p> I have to go now because I want to answer to other people's journals. Sorry I am in such a hurry this time!

<S16/14.03>

When I think I am 18 it doesn't seem to be true, because nothing has changed. <p> I turn<A>ed<a> 18 on Monday and I feel always more depressed. I think about all the happy people near me and I feel jelousy for them. I feel alone but I also discovered the importance of a <U> real <u> friend. I understood that a real friend is the only person ~~we~~ who really can help you. Well I found a friend and lost a boyfriend. OK, it had not to be something forever but it seemed to be the right boy in the right moment. I fell in love 7 months ago with a boy of Milan. Things went always better everything seemed to be bright and happy and after 51/2 months everything has finished and ~~a~~ everything's become dark and sad as it was before. Somebody tells me that it's better so because he was too old (don't ask me his age) and because he lived in Milan but I don't think so. He was old but we had the same ideas and the same mentality of me and so there has never been problem between us. It seems incredibly but it's really so I'm not joking. I don't know what to do. I'd like to phone him but I don't know if it's right or not so I spend the most of the time thinking what to do. What would you do if you were in my situation? He's a few years younger than you and maybe you can advise me for the best. Please help me! Sorry for the paper but I'm at school and I haven't a bigger one! <p> Bye ---

<T01/14.03>

Well, first of all, I wouldn't think the entire world around me to be so happy as it seems to you. Everybody's had their ups and downs in life and you are going through a depressing period. But sadness can be overcome especially if you make an effort to rationalize it. I understand you feel desperate because you have broken off with this guy. What can I tell you? It happens all the time. Look around! I am perfectly aware that this is no consolation at all! If I were you - as you are asking for advice - I would look ahead, trust the future and be serene. Why don't you consider the positive aspects and things of your life? You have several Federica! Above all, I wouldn't force his behaviour. If it is over it is over you have to accept and face it. So, I wouldn't call him. Maybe you already did. But see I can't judge people and situations I'm not exactly familiar with. Why did all this happen in the first place? I don't think age can matter that much; to be frank it is more likely to influence a relationship at your age than later in life. So, this can be an explanation. However, I know people who are your age and have gratifying love-stories, I guess it must depend on the person then. But, believe me, Federica, enjoy yourself with your class-mates, organize your summer with them in England and try to sleep it over. Life is always ready to start again!!!

<S17/11.10>

What I have learned today. as I have learned practically every day since I came to Italy, are several new Italian words. English is a good subject to learn Italian from, because I usually already know what the word means in English. Aside from that, I've also learned a great deal about India that I didn't know before; about the animals and the landscape of the tiger preserves.

<T01/11.10>

India is a really fascinating country. I'd like to visit it. I'm really determined to go to the tiger reserve mentioned in our article and maybe spend a few days there and check if the atmosphere is really the one described by the author. <p> I'm really happy you're learning a lot of Italian through our English lessons because that's how you can interact with us as we don't know your language. Apart from that, I wish you a pleasant stay here with us. I'm sure it will be an interesting experience.

<S17/18.10>

~ What I have learned today ~ <p> <i> Today I've learned a lot about English literature that I didn't know from before. In Norway we don't do much literature in English; only a bit of contemporary literature, so this is something I have never done before. In addition, we usually don't take notes during classes - we read from our text-books and do exercises. In this way, Italian schools differ greatly from the Norwegian ones. I like the English classes here more than the Norwegian ones though; they're definitely more interesting.

<T01/18.10>

The historical and literary period we are dealing with is kind of "heavy" I know. Students usually do not appreciate "old stories" but I'm glad you find it interesting. I'm sure you will like what we will do together as a part of your experience. <p> I'd like to know more about the school system in your country; I hope we can organize something to exchange opinions and points of view. Usually, we illustrate the historical background before analysing the authors' texts. In this, the two systems really seem to differ.

<S17/20.10>

I don't really have anything I haven't understood properly today. The only thing I'm a little confused about are all the kings and queens of England - not only the ones we learned about today, but also the other ones of the 16th and 17th century. It's been such a long time; 5 years. I think; since I had medieval England at school, and therefore I don't remember them very well.

<T01/20.10>

Don't worry about endless lists of Kings and Queens! Just try to remember the most important ones. <p> As to the period we are dealing with at the moment, Henry VII Tudor is important as he is to be considered the founder of the Tudor Dynasty. His son Henry VIII is important for the Reformation in England and also because he is Elizabeth I's father. Elizabeth I is to be remembered because apart from being a great ruler she is also to be identified with Absolutism (the absolutist policy was started by the Tudors, but it's under the Virgin Queen that it was consolidated and reached its height) and above all with Renaissance England (not Medieval)!

<S17/22.11>

One thing I'm sad about: <p> <i> The thing that bothers me most these days is probably the fact that I don't speak Italian fluently. I know I will learn it in time, and that I have to have some patience, but it's still frustrating. It makes me feel rather left out of everything: I can't read a newspaper the way I'm used to, I get headaches from trying to understand television series and movies, and since my vocabulary isn't that varied, I have to keep my language simple and can't really say all the things I want to.

But the biggest problem may be how it hinders my social life: it's hard to make close friends when the subjects of discussion are still limited.

<T01/22.11>

Marianne, <p> I'm so sorry you feel so frustrated! Unfortunately, the acquisition of a new language is not that easy. It takes time and a lot of will-power. But you don't have to force yourself into doing things you were used to just because you were using your own language! You can't ask of yourself what you can't for the moment do. When I lived in the States I went through the same desperate period. I was continuously looking up words in the dictionary, I was continuously bothering my family for explanations. But in the end I made it! So, don't be discouraged, you'll be able to speak, well first to understand, Italian perfectly in just a few months. My suggestion is: try to get some help from your hosting family and friends. In addition, buy a good grammar book and study and, most of all, when you watch TV and you don't understand ask for the words you don't understand because the difficult task is to match sound and meaning. Even if you learn a word a day it is just fine.

<S17/24.01>

Journal Monday 24.01.94 <i> <p> Now I have been in Italy for almost five months, and during this time I have come to see quite a lot of Northern Italy, and now I'm able to enjoy this country a lot more than at the beginning. One of the reasons for this is that my language problems have diminished, which makes travelling and staying abroad so much easier. <i> <p> The one thing that really amazes me about Italy is that everywhere there's something to see - every city has at least a beautiful church or something that was built long ago. During my Christmas vacation I got to see both Venice and Florence, which was a fantastic experience. These cities are, after all, famous and almost mythical all over the world, which made seeing them all the more fantastic. Norway is a very modern country, but we don't have all this Medieval and Renaissance culture still evident in our cities. That's why I think it's so incredible to see so many old, beautiful buildings in one place, still standing in our 20th-century civilization.

<T01/24.01>

<i> <p> It's great you can now enjoy our country and company so much better. I know Italy is a wonderful country as far as history and arts in general are concerned. Wherever you go, you'll find something worthwile being seen. Even remote and very small villages will have something to disclose to you. If I were you I would take advantage of the situation and would organize day trips to places not far from Reggio (I could give you a list of possible destinations in our region) and not exactly famous but unique in beauty and history. Of course, Venice and Florence are just "precious" but go off the track of tourists and you'll discover a lot more. <i> <p> You know, I really think that Italians are very spoiled from a cultural and historical point of view. We aren't aware at all of the many treasures we have just because we are used to having them and seeing them all the time. When I walk down the street or drive in the country-side through small villages everything looks so natural to me because I've grown up with everything which surrounds me and I just don't appreciate 'em enough!

<S17/08.02>

<U> Journal <u> <i> <p> Something that I have found to help me a lot, and that has become an important part of my daily life, is keeping a diary. It is something that I have almost always done, though the way of doing it has certainly changed over the years. <i> <p> As a little girl I had the kind of flower-decorated hardcover book with a lock, where I wrote down everything that I did every single day. But now that I'm older, I do things

differently - I use ordinary notebooks (Cheap and with lots of space!) where I write about events that have touched me in some way, philosophical reflections, feelings and thoughts, even poetry. It is something that helps me a lot - if I'm feeling mad or sad about something, writing about it makes me see it in a different way. It also gives me a chance to think and reflect about my life, and besides - I'll always have written records of the way I acted and though when I was 17 years old.

<T01/08.02>

Keeping track with the events which occur daily in our lives is very nice. I used to do it when I was your age; actually I only did it for a year and then stopped out of laziness. I wish now I had kept on recording my life because when I re-read those pages I can re-live moments and situations which would otherwise be buried under the "heavy burden of living" I don't want to sound too "Hamletic" but I hardly have any spare time for myself and I very seldom stop to think about the past. Anyway, I was saying that through a diary or journal details of our past are easily evoked: where our recollecting capacity might fail, evidence is there. One day I will surely re-read the many pages I have been exchanging with you students and I am sure I will feel moved and touched by the nice discussions we are having. Don't stop writing at least as long as you have the time to do it!

<S17/14.03>

<U> Journal <u> <i> <p> One of the things that really frightens me is all the evil that seems to exist in the world, and the fact that human beings never seem to learn, no matter how many mistakes they make. The increasing amount of violence, for example; the time has long passed since you could feel safe walking alone, or even trust strangers, no matter how friendly and harmless they may seem. And though we are all aware of the infinite sufferings and destruction war brings, new ones are started up, again and

again. After World War II we ought to have learned, and to never permit such a thing to happen again: yet it seems that the same kind of atrocities are taking place now in Bosnia, while the rest of the world seems unable to stop them. I'm beginning to think that these evil traits are firmly rooted in the minds of all human beings, and that it is impossible to defeat them.

<T01/14.03>

This is exactly what Freud wrote in a letter he sent to Einstein. According to the Father of Psychoanalysis, evil and good are deeply rooted in man's nature. He also theorized that man won't be able to eliminate violence as long as neurotic behavior is not rationalized. As a consequence, I presume it will be very hard, if not unlikely, to "to build" a better society. This is very unfortunate. Of course, my explanation is reductive and doesn't consider historical and cultural factors but it was just to point you out that man is mean.

<S18/11.10>

"Write down one thing that you've learned today". <p> Today I've learnead a lot of new words and a few of modi di dire from the article "The tiger and the tourists". I think it's good because this expression could be really usefull in a every day conversation but I do like learning more.

<T01/11.10>

Don't worry we will learn a lot more this is just the beginning of the year. You'll have plenty of time to learn new words, expressions and idioms. For an every day conversation it is really useful to know a lot of vocabulary I agree with you!

<S18/18.10>

"One thing that I've learnt today" <p> Today I've learned that Medioeval dramas were performed on waggons called pageants, because the actors moved from village to village to develope to everyone the religious messages. I found quite interesting too, that this performances lasted a whole day. I liked this lesson very much, because I learnt a lot of things about the every-day life in the Middle Age, in fact before I knew very little about it. It's interesting above all because I could find many differences between that style of life and the modern one.

<T01/18.10>

The main purpose of Medieval Dramas was in fact the spread of religion. The idea of all those waggons is interesting I think, following one after another giving different scenes and events. Well, today it would be impossible with all the traffic!!! I cannot even imagine people spending the whole day watching a play! I am quite lost when I try to decide which way of life is better. Of course, now we are richer and healthier but we don't have time to do anything not even to breathe. Back then they had plenty of time but they lived in terrible conditions. Maybe the answer is: "find out more time today to do things!"

<S18/20.10>

"One thing I'm still wondering about". <p> Today I understood everything during, the literature lesson, and I don't thik that ther's a particoular thing I'm still wondering about. But sometimes I've got some doubts about a correct use of verbs, adjectives and structures in the things I write.

<T01/20.10>

I think that when learning a foreign language doubts are almost necessary to acquire the process of how that language is structured. You will feel more comfortable with tenses, adjectives and structures with practice and practice means reading and writing a lot. In particular, keep up with what we are doing in class, review the same things and re-read the same things.

<S18/22.11>

"One thing I'm happy/sad about" <p> Lately I've been quite sad because, during Halloween's night, River Phoenix (one of the best <A> young <a> American actors) died. He was not my favourite actor, and I haven't seen all his films, but he was very young, <A> infact <a> he was only 23, and he died in a mysterious way. It's strange to think about the death of a famous person, I don't know why, but people's attention is caught from <A> the <a> news about the death of someone famous much more that about the news about the death of common people for example in Bosnia.

<T01/22.11>

The reason why famous people's deaths and misfortunes strike us so much is probably because we are used to thinking of celebrities and especially actors or singers as immortal or as having attributes somewhat special and non-human. That's why we admire them and are fascinated by their lives. These people become real myths for all of us and it's hard to admit and accept that myths, the projection of our desires and hopes, can be destroyed. I did not know the actor you are telling me about but most of all I'm sorry for his young age!

<S18/23.01>

Recently I've been really excited, because Claudia and I are planning our Summer holidays. Probably we'll go to London (for me it'll be the 2nd time) and I think that it's great, because I've got a bit of a mania about London, and Great Britain, and everythings comes from it. <A> Though <a> it doesn't mean that I love everything about it. For example, I found English food absolutly awful. So, even if I'm sure that, if our plans will come true, Claudia and I will miss Italian food, I hope we won't starve!

<T01/23.01>

<i> I totally agree with you when you say the food is not good in England (I wouldn't say it is absolutely awful, leave them a chance)! But I'll tell you, when I was in England early in January I had fairly good food in very nice typical pubs. <p> <i> I like England too, especially because every spot reminds me of some literary or historical event. Often descriptions contained in books I have read are evoked or battles are mentally revived just by being on the spot. My husband thinks I'm crazy but he learned a great deal of history and literature during this trip Poor Thing!!!

<S18/08.02>

I've just finished to see the news on TV. and I'm really upset now for what I have seen: hundreds of corpses in Bosnia. I can't express what I'm feeling now, I don't think that there are proper words for it. I feel absolutely powerless and stupid, because I usually worry about silly and unnecessary things, while in the former Yugoslavia people are dying for no reason! And the most terrible thing is that there are much more deaths among the civilians than among the soldiers! It's awful and inhumane! It's time to stop this slaughter! Sorry if what I've written sounds thick or rhetorical, but at the moment I feel only a lot of confused emotions inside of me!

<T01/08.02>

Dear Rita, <p> It is not so encouraging to watch the news nowadays. Maybe it has never been so, I don't know. What I do know is that too many horrible things have been going on in the world. Bosnia is one of the saddest events in fact. When I see all that blood, all those people and especially children suffering, wounded, and asking for help I feel guilty too. However, I think it's normal to worry about "silly and unnecessary things" when you have solved or do not have certain problems. The history of Yugoslavia has imposed a heavy price to pay on its populations.

History is cruel and violence can't be avoided so easily. <p> In a book called "il Disagio della Civiltà" Freud says evil impulses are inevitably to be found in man's nature and that it will be very difficult "to heal" man. I want peace and I deprecate wars and violence but one rightly wonders...

<S18/14.03>

A few weeks ago I went to the cinema with Rossana and we saw "In the name of the father" with Daniel Day-Lewis and Emma Thompson. I know that you saw that movie too, so I won't tell anything about the plot, but I could write what I liked about it and why. First of all I found really courageous the subject: I think it's really difficoult to talk about the problems between Ireland and England, above all because terrorism still exists. Then I think that the film is harrowing, tragic and gripping and it made me think about justice and law (it's awful that police can force a man to make a false confession with phsyc<A>c<a>ological an physical violence) <A> Finally <a> the acting is simply wonderful: I really hope that another Oscar will go to both Emma Thompson and D. Day-Lewis. And what about Daniel? I find him absolutely gorgeous! (Even if I agree with you: he was much more handsome in "The Age of Innocence")

<T01/14.03>

Yes, the film is disturbing indeed, in that it clearly shows that, when necessary and for personal advantages, Government officials can walk over citizens' rights and thus overlook the basic principles of human respect. Do you understand what 15 years mean and are for a person's life. I can't even imagine such things can happen. A good part, and probably the best as to energy and determination, is not just lost and wasted but ruined and destroyed for ever. I do, too, hope that the film (not just the actors) will be awarded as best film (indeed the choice is difficult) because of its focus on justice and the law. The law system is extremely important for a country, it reflects its degree of civilization and as long as such mistakes occur I doubt we can consider ourselves fair and arrogantly label ourselves as the redeemers of the world. Daniel is a great actor in my opinion also. I am pretty sure that his charm is partly due to the roles he plays. Most actors become real myths for what they mean to us and not for what they really are.

<S19/11.10>

Write one thing that you have learnt today. <p> The thing that I have learnt today and which has impressed me is that English really can communicate to us immagini. Up to now non avevo badato to this sfaccettatura of English, but reading the article: "The tiger and the tourists" I have noticed that most.

<T01/11.10>

Good! That's an interesting discovery. I'm sure you'll have more fun in the next few months because we'll learn a lot more. By the way, Debora, your pronunciation has greatly improved. I'm very happy about that.

<S19/18.10>

Write one thing that you have learnt today <p> Today I've learnt that at Medieval time people's life was more simple than now and these people were very much subdued to the Church. Finally I've learnt that a representation was only good at Medieval time if was able to teach something moral to people.

<T01/18.10>

Yes, correct! Life was very simple indeed during the Middle Ages at least compared to the kind of life we all lead today. During the Middle Ages people were really "subdued" and were asked to submit to the Clergy's will. That's why the Church tried to instruct them by staging moral performances, the so-called

Moralities to improve people's behaviour. Well, they - the people - needed some kind of entertainment anyway!!!

<S19/20.10>

One thing I'm still wandering about. <p> One thing I often ask myself is why England has always had, I mean almost always, queens in spite of kings. I know that this is a question to which we can't give an answer only God or, if you want il destino, knows this answer but it's a question that interest me very much.

<T01/20.10>

Well, maybe we can answer this question. Take, for example, Henry VIII Tudor. He really wanted a male heir but he only had daughters except for a very sick and frail child, that is Edward. So, when Edward died if the Tudor Dynasty wanted to rule over the country they had to give the power to one of Henry VIII's daughters. I guess that's the reason.

<S19/22.11>

One thing I'm happy or sad about. <p> Now I'm happy to attend this school for many reasons. First of all, because I love foreign languages like English and German. Second, I've ~~having~~ had <A> and ~~I'm having~~ I will have <a> the possibility to travel abroad and to know other cultures and people. Third, this school helped me to maturare and to face better than some years ago ~~problems~~ the relationships with other people

<T01/22.11>

I'm really happy you are an enthusiast of the school. I think it is a very good school where both students and teachers work hard. Languages are nowadays extremely important. You can't do much in today's society if you don't speak at least a couple of languages fluently. The most important thing is that you feel this school has helped you to mature and better feel with people. Growing up is a difficult process, everybody thinks teen-agers are happy-go-lucky and careless but it is not always the case. Becoming an adult means to understand that life is not just pink. So, after you've come to this conclusion you need the means to cope with that discovery.

<S19/24.01>

What I'm going to speak about it is concerned with my hobbies. As young people do, I always listen to pop music or rock music and so on, I don't know why but I especially like English or American music and not so much Italian music. My greatest passion is, however, playing tennis, I love very much this sport and I'm sorry because for 3 years I haven't been able to play it <A> frequentely <a> because of the school. Another passion of mine is reading.

<T01/24.01>

It's nice to have hobbies and interests because we need to feel alive after all by doing pleasant activities which can rest both our mind and body. If I were you I would try to find some time out to relax and why not to play tennis even if you haven't played for such a long time. I know school is hard but you can benefit a great deal by "releasing" some tension and stress. Music is a good pastime too. I used to listen to music a lot when I was your age but now I have not that much time to keep updated any more. I only listen to classical music. It's just great! I also read a lot. First of all because I like it and besides that, reading is part of my profession. Reading books can be very relaxing because you can imagine situations and depict characters and objects in your mind. Someone has said that only in their dreams men can be truly free. And, in fact, when you read it is possible to feel all powerful and invincible.

<S19/09.02>

OPEN JOURNAL <p> Last time I wrote my open journal I couldn't speak more about my passion of reading; now I'd like to deal more with it because reading is a very important activity of mine, not only in order to improve my ability in writing, but also to create my own personality. Through books I can and could find answeres to my doubts and questions.

<T01/09.02>

I understand you share my opinions on reading. I find it a very useful and edifying activity in that through books, a person can reflect upon issues and situations he/she would never dream of considering seriously in normal circumstances. I am saying that the relationship a reader can establish with a book is a most valuable one: it can help us grow and discover facets of our personality we completely ignored. I would also like to stress the importance of reading for pedagogical purposes; when studying a second or foreign language especially, reading is excellent exercise. I'm glad you like it!

<S19/15.03>

According to my last open journal I'd like to speak about a book I read last summer. The title of the book is: <U> Pomodori verdi fritti alla fermata di Whistle Stop <u>, by Susan Flagg, I think. I watched also the film and I liked it very much, but the book is more beautiful than the film, it is extremely fascinating. The writer tell the <A> us <a> condition of black people in the first years of the 1900, this description made me able to reflect about people that have another culture and anather position in society. What I realised reading this book is very fascinating. I think you should read this book and if you want I can lend you it.

<T01/15.03>

"Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe" is one of my favorite films. As a matter of fact, I bought the video-tape last summer but I haven't yet read the book. Thank you for offering to lend it to me, I appreciated that. However, I would like to read it in English because I don't like translations. What struck me most in the story was the relationship, actually the friendship, between the two girls. At least, the film focused on this strong affection. The book might instead convey a different message: life in the early 1900's but the two girls must be central in the development of the story in the book as well.

<S20/11.10>

WRITE DOWN ONE THING THAT YOU HAVE LEARNED TODAY <p> Today I've learned many <ps> sconosciute <pe> words, that ~~they~~ were in a beautiful article. Almost I've <Pe> ripassato <pe> the tenses of the verbs, in which I have difficulties.

<T01/11.10>

I'm really happy you enjoyed the article! When you like something you learn more easily and therefore what was "unknown" before becomes familiar. I'm sure you'll remember the words we have studied together today and also the tenses reviewed during the lesson.

<S20/18.10>

I've learned the use and the tradition of the English people in the 1500. They used to go to assist the dramas in the place, where it was a pageant, in which persons played the acts of the drama. I've learned that these populations lived in an extremely poverty and ignoranza and only their cultur was these dramas, that teach the facts of the Bible.

<T01/18.10>

I think it is very interesting to know what life was like in the past because it enables us to better understand the present, too. Thanks to our knowledge of the past we can be grateful not to live in poverty and ignorance, because I think no matter what a person will do with his/her life culture is important.

<S20/20.10>

ONE THING I'M STILL WONDERING ABOUT <p> I' ~~ve s~~ haven't still understood the many english modi di dire and proverbi. I enjoy ~~it~~ <A> them <a>, but I know only a little of them because they are numerosi, how the italian ones.

<T01/20.10>

There's nothing to understand about colloquial expressions or proverbs in English like in any other language! The only way to learn these expressions is to memorize them and to learn how they are used; I mean you have to understand in which context they are elicited. If, on the other hand, you wish to understand their origin or history (a sort of etimology of the expression), well that's more difficult indeed. Slang is terrible, especially in American English. You should be happy to have already learned a few of these familiar expressions because their number is probably huge and endless.

<S20/22.11>

"One thing I'm happy or I'<A> m <a> sad about" <p> I'm very happy about the notice of going to England ten days and about the exchange between our school and an English one. I don't know, if I can make this trip, because I've just been in Barcelona and I will be sad, if I cannot. But first I will question my parents.

<T01/22.11>

I would be very very happy if I could organize this link with a UK school. But it seems quite difficult. I see that news spread fast! Well, I'm glad that you are all excited about this project. I think it is highly educational to live with a foreign family and do all the activities together with this family. Well, I'll see what we can do. If we are not lucky this year maybe it will be for next year. In the meantime ask your parents for next year too!

<S20/22.01>

Good morning, Mrs Morini. I'm at home now, and I'm sitting on the couch. I didn't know what to make and so I thought to you. I'm very angry because I came home late, (a causa) of my street-car, which had a huge (ritardo). In this last time, this happen often and my mother never know when she has to take me at the (fermata degli autobus)!

<T01/22.01>

One doesn't necessarily have to do something all the time. It's nice to be able to sit down and relax once in a while. Thank you for thinking about me! I imagine life is not easy for commuters like you, it must be exhausting to run after buses and means of transport in general. What's more, buses and trains are very seldom on time (we are improving though) and one gets to the office or to school late because of this state of affairs. After all, organization is not something Italians can go about boasting of!

<S20/08.02>

This morning a very strange thing is happened to me. I was sitting on the bus that brings me to school and behind me two girls were speaking of an other girl called Campani Claudia. ~~she~~ <A> They <a> were speaking very bad about this girl, whom I thought be me, so I asked the two girls, ~~who~~ if the girl they were speaking about were I, but they said no and so I know now that in my town there is an (omonima) of mine!

<T01/08.02>

I know you have a namesake! And she attends our school. In fact, I was speaking to my cousin about my students and now I don't remember why but among other names I mentioned your name too. My cousin could not understand who I was referring to as the girl she had in mind was in the fifth form. So I concluded that there must have been a coincidence of names. In case the girl who was being talked about very badly on the bus is not a student in our school than I think there are too many Claudia Campanis!!!

<S20/15.03>

In this time there is in Scandiano the FIERA. It isn't very beautiful and big, but it is something different from usual and a nice place to meet friends. Exactly, ~~and~~ in this period there are ~~b~~ wonderful days with a very shining sun and it is impossible stay at home to make homework and to learn. So by these days it's very boring and especially scocciante go to school. I ~~exp~~ am waiting with MOLTA IMPAZIENZA Eastern holidays!

<T01/15.03>

I know it's annoying to spend one's afternoons at home studying but it wouldn't be more exciting to be working in an office. Let's say that when the weather gets nice and warm it's nice to have a break and go for a stroll tout court! And don't be so impatient because in less than two weeks you will have a break and maybe you'll recharge your batteries. If not, you can always rejoice at the idea of the forthcoming summer holidays.

<S21/11.10>

Write down one thing that you have learnt today. <p> Today I have learnt a new word: "bumper": it is a piece of the car ~~that~~ <A> which <a> protects ~~the ca~~ from bumps. It's important ~~because~~ for me because next year I have to study the rules of the traffic and the name of the parts of a car. Manuela Carobbi

<T01/11.10>

I'm glad to hear that you are already worring about how good you will be on the road. Actually, we need good drivers! I had two accidents last year.

<S21/18.10>

One thing I ~~have~~ have learnt today. <p> Speaking about the Morality Plays I learnt that the ~~astract~~ ASTRATTE things like Death, Beauty, ecc... were ~~im~~ personified in the scene, in order to be rapresented before the people. ~~So the audience~~ So every person could understad what happened in the plays thanks to the use of allegory. Manuela Carobbi

<T01/18.10>

Abstractions had to be personified on the stage to put people in a position to understand what was going on inside the characters. <p> If you think of today's actors and techniques <A> all <a> that seems almost ridiculous but <A> back <a> then the audience was very simple compared to us today.

<S21/20.10>

One thing I'm still wondering about. <p> Today we have spoken about the dinasty of the Tudors, and ~~we said~~ the teacher said many dates. One of these is very important: 1485, but I don't know what ~~one~~ another one represents: 1603. <p> I know that it's the date of the death of Elizabeth I, <p> but I haven't understood why this date is so important.

<T01/20.10>

1603 is very important because when Elizabeth I Tudor dies she leaves no heirs and therefore the Tudor dynasty comes to an end. In fact, after Elizabeth I we have the Stuarts and James I of the Stuart house ascends the throne. The Stuarts will rule over England until 1714.

<S21/22.11>

One thing I'm happy or sad about. <p> I've just arrived from Barcelona where I spent 5 days. The town is beautiful and I'm happy because also the wheather was very fine when we were there, while in Italy it was very cold. <p> In Barcelona we wore only a T-shirt ~~with~~ and a cotton pullover because the sun was very hot. Manuela

<T01/22.11>

I like the sun, I like summertime. In a word I love hot weather. I am always happy when it's sunny outside and the air feels nice and warm. Unfortunately, where we live we have to cope with the cold, which makes me very depressed. I didn't know Barcelona, although not so far from us, is so hot at this time of year.

<S21/22.01>

<i> Yesterday I received a big bunch of flower and obviously I was very happy. I wanted to put them in my bedroom but my mother told me it was better not to put them in <A> the <a> room where I had to sleep, because their "perfume" (?) could cause a headache to me during the night. So she made me put the flowers in the living-room, but I was not happy about that because they were mine!!! When I got up this morning the flowers were still in the living room but when I came from school 2 hours ago, I found them in my bedroom just in front of the door. This time I can not SECCARE them as I always do with roses, because this ~~type~~ <A> sort <a> of flowers/will <A> wither <a> without SECCARSI and I can not put them near the SECCATE roses. But there is something that I can do: I can put the red bow with the other bows which were in the presents for me that I have received for 2 years. Manuela Carobbi

<T01/22.01>

<i> Sorry to answer you back on this piece of paper but the things I'd like to tell you are too many and I just need more space. To begin with, I'm very curious to know who gave you the wonderful bouquet of flowers and why, because I think it's not fair to go on telling me how extraordinary and sweet-smelling and fragrant these flowers were without saying a word about the

sender! Also, I have to admit that it is always a nice surprise to receive flowers and plants especially. The only problem with flowers is that they wither and die so soon! Some time ago I read Eric Fromm's "To have or to be" (great book) and if you ever read it, you'll realize that the author's point of view on picking flowers is totally different from ours. That's to bad but I think he is right. Another point I wish to make is that I like the idea of drying up flowers; in fact I have dessicated flowers in the house too. What I even did with bouquets of flowers was take pictures of them. I have beautiful pictures of a gorgeous bouquet my mother gave me for my birthday a couple of years ago and they still look nice! That could be an idea too!

<S21/07.02>

<i> Sorry for the paper but I've found only this and here you have all the space you need to answer me back! The answer to my "secret": 1 obviously, the person who gave me the flowers was my boyfriend. 2 the reason? 2 years and a half we are together. I didn't write you about that because I ~~didn't~~ thought you weren't interested in, but now that I know you are, I want to tell you more about that. Since I have known him he has given me a lot of bouquets of flowers because he knows I love flowers. <p> Thank you for the advice to take pictures of them, but I ~~didn't~~ don't understand what you mean by PICTURE; if you mean "drawing" I haven't tried so far; if you mean "photograph" I ~~have~~ have taken photographs of my fowers very often. In fact, the last time I took a photograph of them the same day I wrote ~~you~~ to you. And thank you also for the title of Eric Fromm's book, I hope I'll have the time to read it during the summer because now I'm very busy. But I have a question for you: Did you read it in Italian or in English? Because if ~~you red~~ it is in English it is probably too difficult for me. In 10 days we have "S. Valentino" ~~I~~ and if you want us to go on writing open journals I will ~~so~~ tell you what I will have received on this occasion...I have a big problem: I have

no idea for the present for my boyfriend. I must think and think about that. Manu.

<T01/07.02>

Of course, I mean photograph because I can't draw, I am terrible. I love going to art exhibitions but I could never ever become a painter; too bad! I'd like to show you pictures of my beautiful flowers and plants. I'll bring them to school one day. The book I mentioned in the last journal had been lent to me by my father and as he can't read in English he read it in Italian. The original version is, however, in English although Eric Fromm was either German or Austrian. I don't really know much about his private life, so I couldn't tell you why he ended up writing in English. Anyway, I am interested in all you'd like to tell me because I like to know something more about my students and this not out of curiosity but because I am convinced that when people live, work or experience life together - and school is an experience - the more they know about one another the better the rapport is. One of the reasons why I'm doing this activity is to create a different atmosphere. Of course there are also pedagogical implications. There are studies which confirm this. So, I hope to be successful.

<S21/14.03>

<i> Last Monday we started to read some sonnets of the Elisabethan Age. I like~~d~~ them very much because they deal with love and the power of the poetry which can immortalize feelings. <i> <p> Not only I like their themes but also the style: the lines are very musical and easy to ~~be~~ understand. Last year we read some sonnets wrote by Petrarca and I like~~d~~ them too. <p> I hope we will read others!!! Manuela Carobbi

<T01/14.03>

Renaissance Poetry is not usually appreciated by students your age because they find it very boring. So, I can't but express words of praise for someone who, despite the conventional character of these sonnets, likes them a lot. I do, too, think that the verse is so musical and beautiful. The sounds of the English language are so sweet especially if used with skill and expertise. <p> Yes, we will read other poems in the next few months and not only poems written by Elizabethan poets. I think you will like them even better because you'll find out that poetry becomes more spontaneous and personal as centuries go by.

<S22/11.10>

Write down one thing that you have larned today. <p> perishing: extremely cold <l> spot = to see, to watch something <l> herds of camcorder-touting tourist = tourist carrying a video camera. <p> These are some words and expressions that I've learned today during the two English hours. We have read a copy about a trip in Rajasthan and these are the expression that have <WU> mainly <wu> colpito me.

<T01/11.10>

The article we have studied today was really an interesting one. That's how you learn new words and vocabulary. Of course it would be nicer to take a trip to the place and verify everything on the spot! But it is not always possible. <p> Also, memorize the words you might need some of them in your conversations.

<S22/18.10>

2 hours of literature is too much for me. <p> So, 1 thing I've learnt today is the use of direct/indirect object. So, I've finally understood where I have to put the direct object if it's a noun or a pronoun and when to put the preposition before the indirect object. <p> I ~~find~~ found lliterature less stressing and difficult than grammatic, but the "today lesson" has been too long in my opinion. I hope that this has been the first and the last time we've ~~made~~ done 2 hours of literature. And I don't like the programn of

next Monday, I don't want to do ~~make~~ a classwork!! <p> Do we really need to do it?

<T01/18.10>

I agree with you. Two hours teaching and trying to understand literature is exhausting for both teachers and students. But I have to catch up with it because I started school late. As soon as we have reached quite a confortable "speed" we will slow down a bit. I'm not sure grammar is more difficult than historical and literary concepts. It probably depends on the people. As to the test I'm going to give you next Monday I just want to check if you are still good. That's all.

<S22/20.10>

I don't know, I think I've understood everything about your lesson. <p> But I know that, after I've studied, it will be something not so clear as I think now. It's always the same, after studying I understand that I've lost some words, maybe keywords, during the lesson and my notes are not clear. But first of all I've to study, next time I'll answe~~a~~r your question. Maybe, as I told you last time, I'm not so sure about the use of to made/to do.

<T01/20.10>

It very often happens to go back home, open up books, study notes and find out that there is something you thought you had understood but you did not. From what I understand but I may be wrong you don't elaborate what I say in class and tend to write down the exact words I speak. Try to understand concepts and ideas and write down your own key-words corresponding to your interpretation of facts and then we can talk about it.

<S22/22.11>

One thing I'm sad/happy about. <p> One thing I'm happy about it's my horse: it is a female and it's going to have a baby. ~~in a~~

~~month~~ So in a month I ~~will~~ am going to have a small horse to look after. <p> This is a really great thing in my opinion, because I love animals a lot and small babies in particular. I think that <A> young horses <a> ~~they~~ are ~~so~~ funny, they can't walk for a few days and they have so long legs and sweet eyes. I love them. I think I will have a lovely one. I'm so unquiet and happy as <A> if <a> this little horse ~~was~~ were my own baby!!

<T01/22.11>

What you have written is really beautiful! In fact, I can feel a lot of emotion in your words. You do sound like a real mother. It is important to love animals and respect them because they are a sort of connection with that natural world we so often tend to forget. I once used to live in the country and I can say my best friends were animals especially dogs (I love dogs!). I grew up among all sorts of animals so that I was know in the family as "the savage". But now I have become a "city girl". I like what one can do in big cities especially and I have a lot of fun when I stay with my friend in NY or Chicago. I do hope though I can some day keep a dog, a German Shepherd: absolutely my best friend.

<S22/23.01>

As I have already told you, my little horse was born six days ago. So, as I have noticed that you love animals, I would like to tell you something more about this little girl, whose name is Mahtab (in Italian this means: ~~raggio~~ "Chiaro di luna") She's very small, with long grey legs and big eyes. She's light brown, but ~~her~~ has got dark brown head and neck. <p> (She's a rainbow!) Curiosity is her f~~r~~irst peculiarity, in fact she's a girl! Mathab is friendly and has a very good charac~~h~~ter, but when she has the so said "5 minutes", she becomes <A> a <a> creazy horse, good only for the rodeo! Sometimes she really looks like a dog, in fact she behaves as Guendalina, my springer-spaniel dog. For this reason, I'm sure that you will like ~~her~~ Mathab a lot and I invite (!?!) you to see her, whenever you have time!

<T01/23.01>

Well, first of all I would like to thank you a lot for the invitation. I would love to see your little horse and maybe I could show you the pictures of my father's horse. She is a "girl" too; in fact a "woman" as she is not that young any more and her name is Silla. <p> She has got a nice white little star right in the middle of her forehead and (I don't know much about her lately) was quite irritable Just crazy! My father used to do steeplechase and was always lying flat on the ground. It was terrible! I'm still wondering how he managed not to break his neck! Now he doesn't partecipate in horse-races any more, he just takes it easy and looks after his beloved horse. As far as I am concerned I don't ride. I tried when I was 12 but I fell down this horse we had at the time and whose name was Luna (beautiful horse) and never considered horse-riding any more. It was a very funny scene, one day I'll tell you about it.

<S22/08.02>

<U> JOURNAL <u> <p> Thanks a lot for your answear! But we can't always speak about animals, so I would like to change the theme of our journal. Do you agree? I mean, we can speak, better write, about many other things, also if today I've no idea of what I can tell you! This is ~~a~~ really a funny week at school, my schoolfriends and <WU> I <wu> <A> me?!? <a> are very ~~exciting~~ excited, in fact we have to prepare a show for S. Valentino and performe it in front of the other classes. So we are very busy in organizing our performance. I would like to give you a "scoop" and tell you our idea, but I can't, I've promised don't tell ~~it~~ anybody! Are you going to do something special for carnevale?

<T01/08.02>

The idea of the journal is to have you students write about topics and themes which interest you; so I do not mind changing the topic at all. I want you to lead the game! I'm sorry I haven't had time to answer sooner but I'm always doing too many things at a time! Anyway, I congratulate you all on your very nice St. Valentine's performance, actually video-tape. I find the idea of the video-tape really funny and unusual. Congratulations again. I didn't do anything special for Carnival, to tell you the truth, my husband and I didn't even realize it was Carnival! That's too bad! <p> I used to dress up and go to parties up to a few years ago. Now I have lot some energy and enthusiasm because I am too busy or maybe I am starting to feel the "burden" of passing years!? I am just joking, I don't feel old at all. On the contrary, the problem is that I feel too young! Crazy, crazy! <p> You called me an hour ago to tell me that you can't go with us tonight. I am sorry you are going to miss the play tonight because I think it is so great. I mean the tragedy, the performance might not be good at all. I hope you are enjoying reading "Macbeth" though. Tomorrow we will read the last act and then no more Shakespeare. I know everybody thinks he is "heavy". <p> What about your horse? Is she doing all right? I'd like to show you the pictures I took some time ago of my father's horse. I want to have your opinion as you are an expert. OK, I'll see you tomorrow and if you can try to come to the movies with your mom if you have time. They are so good!

<S22/15.03>

<i> Hi! I'm sorry for this red-pen, but I haven't any other, so I can only use this! I am sorry I missed the play last night, but I had forgotten that I had to meet some friends to have dinner toghether in my house!! For what concerns the English movies, I'm sorry too, but my mother is busy on Thursday and I usually have lots of <WU> Histrory <wu> and <WU> Philosophie <wu> to learn!

<p> What about my horses? Well, the big one is doing all right, I mean she feels well, she's just a little bit fat, but this isn't a problem. Instead, the baby-horse is very ill! I have to spend lots of time with her, in order to help her, because she cannot breathe well and her hurt is working too fast! But I hope for the best, I am usually optimistic. Thank you for your congratulations about our video-tape, but I think we <A> still <a> have to improve ourselves, because we haven't played at best of our possibility!! Next year ~~wil~~ we will give you and your husband a part in our next video-tape, so will have fun with us for Carnival!! <p> Remember that you've promised ~~me~~ to show me the pictures of your father's horse I'm very interested in watching them!!

<T01/15.03>

No problem for the red ink! <p> To tell you the truth I did not like the play we went to see on the 8th. I would have preferred a more classical version of Macbeth. But it was an experience anyway. As for the movies, I still go every week - I have only skipped a couple - and I enjoy them very much. Next week, the last movie is going to be on and after that no more English movies until next fall. Well, maybe you will have more time then. <p> I know you have a lot of History and Philosophy to study. In fact, everybody - students and teachers - is working very hard at the moment. As far as I am concerned, I know I am going at a good pace with you kids and though you may be angry with me and criticize my choices - I know you are a little upset right now - I am convinced that systematic and good work is necessary not just to learn notions but to become responsible. And then everybody on vacation! <p> I hope your little horse is doing better. In the meantime I have prepared the pictures for you to see. <p> Also, I'd like to thank you for the invitation regarding next year's video-tape. Just be informed that my husband and I are terrible actors. I doubt we can measure up with your expectations!!!

S23/18.10>

One thing I have learn today <p> I learnt a lot of new things today. <p> Mostly in the third hour of lesson I learnt how important the religion was in the medival century and how the persons were succubi of their convintions. <p> Exept <A> of <a> the litterature, I didn't like the grammar exercises because they are boring even if they have a huge importance. <p> Without them we couldn't be able to speak or write English.

<T01/18.10>

Religion was really crucial at that time. The Church undoubtedly the core of Society everything revolved around its community. People had to submit to the rules imposed by the Clergy otherwise you would be considered an heretic. Literature and history apart, I know you don't like grammar but except for 2 or three tests we won't take any more this year. This doesn't mean that you can make mistakes!

<S23/22.11>

One thing I'm happy or sad about <p> Todays I'm happy because Christmas hollidays are coming soon and I'll have ~~get~~ some time free, but I'm also a bit sad because I know that in that period I'll have a lot of homework to do. I have missed a lot of lessons and now I've to study the double of the normal. <p> I'm also happy because in Christmas hollidays I'll be 20 and my ancle don't hurt any more so I'll ski a little bit, hoping not to hurt me again. I'm happy also because my mother has passed her first exam. She is wonderful. She can take care of her family and, in the same time, study. Is nice to notice that a 40-years old woman can be able to do such a exciting thing to ~~make~~ turn her life better.

<T01/22.11>

First of all I'd like to congratulate your mom on her achievement. It's really fantastic! A 40-year-old woman (she is still very young though) who wants to improve her life is to be admired. Secondly, I suggest you try to catch up with the subjects you feel you have neglected in these past few months. I personally don't consider your situation desperate. You have plenty of time ahead and don't get discouraged, please! And of course try to relax also! Christmas holidays are nice for that, too!

<S24/11.10>

Write down about something learned today. <p> Today is not a particular day because nothing particular has happened yet. <p> I've learned that my friends in the classroom hanno trascorso a better weekend than the one of mine because yesterday I had to stay all day with my parents and so on and saturday night too because I went out already the saturday before.

<T01/11.10>

You don't seem very happy about your week-end spent at home with your family. Well, it is not always possible to do what you like but maybe you'll be allowed to go out next week-end.

<S24/18.10>

Today is a day like the others, but at this time I've learned that my weekend was better than the one of some friends (I went out last saturday). <p> I'm a little tired now because I've just finished almost two hours of English literature and I feel this part of the program not so interesting like those I learned last year at the end of the scolastic year. But I think that the actual English literature is more interesting than what I've just learned in <the continuation of this entry, T01/18.10, S24/20.20, T01/20.10 missed>

<S24.22.11>

Today I have felt literature more interesting than last time because I like that historical period and the particular figure storiche. I'm a little tired now and I'm hungry too. I'm happy because my parents acconsentirono yesterday to my holiday in Barcellona with some friends in the school. My sister, who is in the first class, is going to come with me there. <p> She has learned English since september because she learned French douring the years of the "Scuola Media" and she like this new <A> foreign <a> language very much. <p> She says that she will learn English better than I can but I don't think so.

<T01/22.11>

I like the historical figures we are dealing with during our lessons, too. Besides being interesting and outstanding from a historical point of view, they also allow us to gossip a whole lot!!! Henry VIII and all his wives, daughters and son! As to the school trip, I'm happy your parents gave you and your sister the opportunity to go to Barcelona. I've never been there but I've heard that it's a nice town. Too bad you won't be able to visit, actually to see the paintings at the Mirò Foundation because at the moment they are being exhibited in New York. Do not discourage your poor sister! She is only in the first year. You should support her and tell her that at least she will be good as you.

<S24/23.01>

Today is Sunday and finally I'm at home. It has been a terrible week for me: I'm very tired and also a little worried because of my situation at school. Fortunately this terrible time si avvia at the end. Now I have no idea what I can write. Today I'm remaining at home because of I have my homework. I have to do it at Sunday because yesterday I went out and I had a good time all the afthernoon long. Yesterday evening I went out again with my friends and I went to the disco; I enjoied my self and I went to bed very late. It's because of this, that I'm so tired now. My week-end has been beautiful and I hope to spend new week-ends like this.

<T01/23.01>

I enjoy staying at home on Sundays because, unfortunately, it's the only day of the week I can really rest. I am off duty on Sundays. This doesn't mean I don't work, but at least I don't have to get dressed, to put make up on, to run here and there. And if I feel like it, I stop and watch a video. However, I think I'll organize outings to go somewhere as soon as the weather gets warmer. I'm sure you don't spend all your Sundays at home and indeed you need some psychological rest, but I don't have to tell you how to organize your time. As to school, yes this terrible time is coming to an end, but a new semester is ahead of us. Don't be nervous, just do your best and what you can.

<S24/08.02>

Douring these days I'm not so tired ~~like~~ <A> as <a> in the precedenti ones. Eventually the first semester has finished and <A> now <a> when I think about school I'm not so worried ~~like~~ <A> as I was <a> a week ago. I find my pagella dignitosa, but I'm <A> a little <a> ~~afraid~~ <A> sad <a> because of my notes in math~~s~~ and first of all in written English. I hope to learn to write a good paragraph and consequentely a good essay before the end of this year because it's extremely important. I'm a little unlucky; I write accettabili paragraphs at home but douring the classworks! There are some argomentations that I don't like so much and sometimes I have in my mind only stupid examples or, when they are good, ~~are~~ it extremely difficult to explicate them decentemente, <p> When I speak about math I lose all my hopeness: I try to understand it, but it's all inutile In this semester I'm going to curare and riempire all my lacune and I hope that all will be good.

<T01/08.02>

Yes, finally the first semester is over! I was very tired too, actually I was exhausted and now I feel more relaxed. I am happy to read that you have given yourself a few priorities. You have to work hard but don't lose hope. You'll have plenty of time to feel desperate in the future...and not because of school. Back to paragraphs and essays, if you feel you write quite acceptable pieces of writing at home, why shouldn't you be doing the same in class? Relax, don't panic! <p> During this semester try to focus on the school problems you are having, try to identify your troubles and the causes, both technical and emotional. <p> I was happy to find out yesterday that you are getting on pretty well with grammar. I would however insist on practising the language as much as I could if I were you. <p> Of course, it's difficult to explain ideas and concepts in a different language, but you have to make an effort to succeed in speaking and writing better. And as to decent topics to discuss in your paragraphs, just organize them in a coherent whole.

<S25/20.10>

One thing I'm still wondering about. <p> Last week we discussed about Integration in general with our teacher of german. I think it's a difficult argument because the teacher didn't want that we talk about racism. She asked us what integration means and we couldn't really answer. I think that everybody must respect the opinions and the ideas of the other without trying to change one's mind. We must accept strangers, sexualmen, ecc. because they are like us and I think this is integration, but the teacher explained us that there is a hidden meaning concerning many kinds of integration. I'm still wondering about that because if she's right, we have examples of integration even in little events or not so important events. We must integrate in our everyday life and it's an actual problem.

<T01/20.10>

First of all, I'd like to apologize for being late in answering. Integration is a really difficult topic for discussion. I don't think your teacher of German didn't want you kids to exchange ideas on racism, probably she didn't have enough time to discuss everything. Respect and tolerance are important when interacting with other people. However, when people speak together and take active part in a conversation, they also want to influence the interlocutors' opinions. Of course it's different if people do not accept the opinions of others. <p> I think that integration should be considered in a broader sense. Integration does not only refer to homosexuals or different races but I don't understand why you feel it is a real problem to integrate daily.

<S25/22.11>

One thing I'm happy or sad about <p> One thing I'm happy about is our school trip. We went in Barcelona and we enjoyed ourselves very much. We visited beautiful places <A> and monuments <a> like the "Sagrada Familia" of Antonio Gaudi, and many other cathedrals and churches. We had a very good guide and we could see all the city. At evenings, we gathered in our rooms and joaks together. Friday night we went to the "Cafè de las artes", a very nice place where two animators involved people in their spectacle. Then, we spent afternoons in the main streets of Barcelona called "las Ramblas". There are a lot of shops and in these streets you can find "artists" like mime or people who made portraits. I think Barcelona is a beautiful city, and I'm very happy I participated to this trip, because I also visited the Picasso museum, which is wonderful.

<T01/20.10>

Well, very little space is left for me; so I'll just say that I'm glad you had so much fun and that you did so many things during the day and in the evening. <p> Your afternoons seem to have been pretty busy. <p> I've never been to Barcelona and therefore can't picture in my mind the places you saw.

<S25/22.01>

"LITTLE BUDDHA" <p> Two weeks ago I saw a very very good film, it was: "Little Buddha" of Bernardo Bertolucci, an Italian director. I think this film it's a masterpiece for its images and for its actors. It is about Buddhism, which appears a very positive religion. During the film you can see wonderful places like Tibet, India and Nepal, where the scenes take place. Bertolucci is very able in creating certain atmospheres and expressing particular concepts. Buddhists always seem so calm, so serene and I like the meditation. I'm not a Buddhist but I think meditation is important because you learn to control your feelings and your emotions. I'm happy I saw this film because I've known things about this religion that I didn't know before.

<T01/22.01>

I saw "Little Buddha" a few weeks ago too. To tell you the truth I didn't like it as much as you did. I love Bertolucci I think he is a great director but compared to "Sheltering Sky" or "The Last Emperor" this film is not extraordinary. The photography is gorgeous, (Storaro is undoubtedly an excellent photographer), the scenes of course were beautiful because they were shot in such magnificent scenary! On the whole, it is an enjoyable story but not good. I haven't read anything but I'm sure the film will not be awarded as happened to "The Last Emperor". I'm sorry I have "destroyed" your film but I'm just expressing an opinion.

<S25/08.02>

SUMMER <p> I'm anxiously waiting for the summer because I can't stand the cold, the fog and sadness of the winter <A> no more <a>. Summer means sun, holidays, sea and friends. There's a beautiful place called Alghero in Sardinia; my family and I always spend our summer in this wonderful island, also because my mother was born there. I have a lot of friends in Alghero, they are sincere, generous, kind and we always enjoy all together. We spend our days on the beach swimming, joaking or playing the guitar and singing. We often go for some trips on the coasts and discover gorgeous and uncontaminated places. Our evenings are very exciting, we do a lot of things and we meet new people, too. I really wish the summer to come soon.

<T01/08.02>

I perfectly understand what you mean, because I can't stand the winter either. But it looks like spring is coming, the temperature is mild almost warm and days are longer and brighter. You will soon be able to enjoy your friends' company again. I have been to Sardinia only once and I must admit it is a most beautiful island. The water is so gorgeous, the colors are beautiful and the food too. You are lucky to have the opportunity of having a ready place where you can spend such wonderful moments. I would love to have a house at the seaside because I could sunbathe for months without getting tired of the sun. Come on! We'll be happy soon!!!

<S25/15.03>

FRIDAY NIGHT <p> Last Friday my schoolfriends and I went out together. It was Federica and Rita's birthday and we went to eat a pizza in a place called "Da Ciccio", this name made us laughing. We enjoyed ourselves very much and then we went to the disco. It was funny, the music was good (I love rock and hard rock music) and we met a lot of people. There were beautiful boys, too. Last year I was new in the school, so I never go out with the schoolgirls because we didn't know each other. But this year we do many things together, sometimes we quarrel, but I'm happy we are more closed now.

<T01/15.03>

Well, I am really happy to hear that you are in close relationship with your schoolmates this year. It surely helps to feel part of a group! From what I can see the general atmosphere in the class has changed all together and for the best. This is really good because it is important to learn to grow together and to face problems together. I am aware of the fact that tension may develop within a group, a group of people is made up of different personalities, and one can't just like everybody but what I expect is mature people who know and are willing to handle discrepancies. And I have the impression the class is doing well!

<S26/18.10>

The lesson of today has been quite interesting, I have to say that ~~an~~ <A> one <a> hour and a half of ~~let~~ literature is very stressante, because religious ~~arguments~~ <A> dramas <a> are not very interesting. <p> The grammatical argument is important, because next monday we are going to have a classwork and I am quite afraid, because I have some problems with the tense-sistem. I hope that my doubts will go away. <p> NOT to ~~forgiv~~ forget is ~~that~~ that today I have lerned some new words, like <ITQ> wits <itq> and <ITQ> fellowship <itq>. ~~If I ???~~ Actually I don't retain that literature of ~~these~~ this period is interesting.

<T01/18.10>

I can imagine that nearly 2 hours of literature is too much! I agree but you see I have to catch up! I started school late and now I'm forced to fly! I know it's stressing and I don't want to produced stressed students. <p> I don't exactly remember you having so many problems with the tense system, I do remember you had problems with paradigms! Grammar rules are important but do not be obsessed please! I think that what we will do in the next few months will be more interesting for you but of course this literary period is not as interesting as the 19-th century. Well my opinion probably doesn't mean, <???>

<S26/20.10>

<U> One thing I'm still wondering about <u> <p> ~~The lesson of today~~ <p> The lesson of English of today has been ~~a~~ very interesting, because I like ~~very~~ this ~~q~~ kind of history. In fact, the royal ~~famyl~~ family has a wonderfull story. I don't agree with the choice of Henry the VIII to divorce from Catherine d'Aragon. ~~If~~ <A> I understand that <a> he wanted ~~another~~ break away from the clurgy, <A> but <a> this is not a write reason to <ITQ> ripudiare <itq> in this way his wife. ~~But now I don't know~~ She's a woman, and I can imagine how she felt.

<T01/20.10>

Today's lesson was interesting because if you want to understand something more about the English culture you can't ignore the Royals. You would fail to understand the soul of the people (now more and more people don't care about the Royals any more) Henry VIII's decision to divorce Catherine was taken because Henry had a great project in mind. And you know, greatness is something which attracts and intrigues people! So, who cared about poor Catherine of Aragon. Indeed, she must have felt terribly hurt when her husband repudiated her and refused to acknowledge her as his wife. But women are strong!

<S26/22.11>

One thing I'm happy/said about. <p> Yesterday Reggiana, the football team of ~~my city,~~ Reggio Emilia, won its first match in the major league. I'm very happy because Reggiana is a good team and his coatch <A> ~~earch~~ <a> ~~has right ambition~~ Marchiaro has right ambitions for the future. He wants to remain in <ITQ> Serie A <itq> and he said that Reggiana is able to do it. Yesterday we could win thanks to the apport of two new playesrs, Futre and <???>. They are the authors of the two goals and for this reason the pubblic of Reggio that <???> very do to them. But unfortunally Futre, who rappresents la svolta of the team, had a bad accident during a match. He was taken to the hospital and there he was said that his knee has to be operated. He will be able to play just in a few months. It's a real damage.

<T01/22.11>

I didn't know you were a football fan! I don't know anything about football; both my husband and I are not at all interested in it, which I'm glad of as I couldn't stand a man going around on Sunday afternoons with his ears "sticked" to a radio-set. However, I'm proud of the fact that our city team is doing ok and that we have good chances to make it. Until last year (I mean, season) the football-player Facciolo lived in the same building as mine; he was very nice but unfortunately they sold him to another team. I know he was not considered a good player. It was rumored that he liked women too much and therefore couldn't concentrate on the matches too well. It's a real pity Futre won't be able to play in the next few months but I hope he is not the only one on whom the team can rely on! Well, I'll probably see you darting along the streets of Reggio at the end of the season rejoicing and screeming together with the other supporters of the team if we are succesful. <p> Just don't become a hooligan!

<S26/20.01>

JOURNAL <p> <A> Last <a> Sunday afternoon the volley team of Reggio Emilia won an ~~important~~ unhoped match against Alpitour Cuneo. This victory is very important, because our team wants to ~~st~~ remain in the major league, but ~~this~~ result is ~~ve~~ difficult to realize. I like volleyball very much and for reason I play in a ~~tea???~~ team for almost 8 years, but ~~now~~ in this period I can't because I have some phisical problems. I hope that my phisical situation will get ~~mor~~ better and that Giglio, the team of Reggio, will remain in <ITQ> Serie A <itq>.

<T01/20.01>

I understand that you are really fond of sports. Unfortunately, I'm not a very good interlocutor as I know very little about what's going on in soccer, basketball or volley-ball. <p> However, I'd like for the teams of Reggio to be successful because we need to "export some glory". We need some attention and, of course, being in the major leage means to be in the spotlight. As to soccer, I'm not sure whether we'll be able to confirm our position next year. Our team is playing so badly. It's awful! Maybe we won't "export any glory". Probably the building of a new stadium is not exactly what I would call a good idea. I know that you have been playing volley-ball for several years (your mom told me last year) and I think it's good physical and mental exercise (like most sports though). Too bad you can't play these days. Why? What happened to you?

<S26/07.02>

OPEN JOURNAL <p> During these days I'm discussing with my parents where I will spend my study-holiday this year. I have no idea, because I would like either going to London, that I visited last year in July, or Berlin, that indeed I've never seen. Two years ago I lived <A> a mounth <a> in Germany, in Kassel, it was a wonderful experience because I could speak the language easily and without problems, besides I met people ~~there~~ <A> coming <a> from every part of the world. Last year I ~~was in~~ <A> went to <a> England, but it was not so exiting, because of the family, and of the school, that wasn't very "serious". ~~We were~~ There ~~was~~ <A> were <a> a lot italian people and for this reason I always spoke Italian and ~~my English did~~ <A> consequently <a> I didn't improve my knowledge of English. I'm quite shy and if I'm not shore of what I'm going to say, I prefer to shut up. I know that it's bad for anyone ~~th~~ who studies languages, but I'm always afraid of making a mistake Infact, I always go abroad with some friends because I can count on their help. What can I do?

<T01/07.02>

From what I understand, the main point is not where you would like to spend your holidays abroad but <U> how <u>. Wherever you go you'll find not only people from all over the world but a lot of Italians as well. Just avoid them and make friends with foreigners so that the only way to communicate is to resort to the second language. I know it's difficult to express opinions and feelings in a foreign language when you are not sure about the structures and vocabulary to be used. But as I keep telling you all the time you must dare, you must take risks. It's high time you started! Not just you, I mean all of you. I want to see you active and determined to speak English. You don't have to worry about mistakes, everybody makes mistakes; We make mistakes in our own language too! Just think that what you are now writing you can virtually speak it. It's a question of practise. I hope I'll have time to work on spoken language but as you know it's not my responsibility!

<S26/14.03>

As you already know, some class-friends and I are discussing where to spend our holiday ~~this~~ next summer. ~~The choi~~ We would like to go to London and we would like to rent a flat, but we have no idea how to find it. Besides, I don't think that my parents would agree, because London is considered to be <A> extremely <a> dangerous. But I also think that if we decide to go to London, we have to be very carefull, because we wouldn't live ~~by~~ <A> in <a> a family. I'd prefer to go to England because I need to improve my English and since I've been to London only two days, I would like to know better the city.

<T01/14.03>

London is a very interesting and beautiful city but it is not the only place where you can study English. However, if your intention and desire is to go to London, the "chances" of survival are of course very high but you have to realize that London is not Reggio and I can understand your parents' worrying about it. I was 16 the first time I was in London. I lived with an English family for a month and attended a summer school. I had a great time and nothing happened to me but not always a stay turns out to be a pleasant one. And it also depends on what your ideas of a possible vacation are. If I were you I would go and stay with a family; at least you won't have to worry about cleaning and cooking and you are forced to use the language. Not all families are nice and open-minded but I think that the more you get acquainted with different cultures and ways of life the better it is. The family who hosted me in London was very nice but their cat was always walking on dishes and glasses and I would find him purring proudly on the kitchen towel, which was greasy and dirty by the way, but I survived!!!

<S27/14.04>

This year hasn't begun very well. When I came back to Bari, after having spent my Christmas holidays here, in Reggio Emilia, I had a lot of problems with my family. <p> So I had to go away from Puglia, to come here to live with my mother and my brother who needed me. <p> It was a difficult decision to take because of the circumstances. <p> Unfortunately it was a mistake, because now I'd like to return to my grand-mother in Bari. (From my naissance I've always lived with her, my grand-father, my haunt, my cousin and my brother, Federico. Three years ago my grand-father died and last september my brother left us to go to my mother who has already been living in Reggio Emilia for four years). <p> Now my grand-mother is living only with my haunt and my cousin. <p> I know they need my help, so I've understood that my duty is to go to them because, during all my life they've always loved me, and above of all they have done everything for me. So as I have <A> had <a> to come to Reggio for my mother, now I have to return to my real family in Mola, trying at the same time, to live my life in the best way.

<T01/14.04>

Arianna, <p> I understand you are going through a difficult period of your life. I am sorry about it. Your position is a difficult one because you are trying to mediate situations which which are not likely to be solved through a compromise. On the one hand, you have your mother and your brother, on the other your grandmother, your aunt and your cousin. I'd like to be of comfort to you but I'm afraid you can be the only one to take such a decision. Whichever decision you will take, try to consider the advantages and disadvantages of both staying here and going back. <p> In case you decide it is more convenient for you to stay here, then I am sure your grandmother will understand. After all you can always go back during the summer. I'd like to add that I have a good opinion of you as a person and student, though we have known each other for too short a time. Even if your tests didn't turn out to be extremely good, I can see that you are working a lot. I like though people.

<S28/11.10>

Today I have learnt that my mother has the intection of buying a new car. She would like a grey one but muy father doesn't want. He would prefer a red, ~~sport car~~ <A> elegant <a> car <A> while <a> my sister and I would like to own a ~~sport and cheap~~ black little one.

<T01/11.10>

What a coincidence! I'm thinking of buying a new car, too! Actually I need one and guess what? It will be red.

<S28/18.10>

Today I've learnt my grandfather has gone to hospital, because he must have an operation. He can't see so good recently and ~~so~~ he

~~feels~~ isn't very well because of his eyes. He took some medecines but ~~now~~ <A> he stopped them <a> ~~2~~ two days ago. Then he decided to be visited by ~~an oculist~~ a specialist. He said he had to <A> be <a> recovered ~~in hospit~~ in hospital for a~~n~~ <A> serious <a> operation.

<T01/18.10>

Well, I'm glad your grandfather was seen by a specialist so that he will be hopefully and eventually feeling better. I don't know what kind of problem is having but hospitalization is usually the rule for serious matters. Let's cross fingers for him. But be confident: things usually work out better.

<S28/20.10>

One ~~thing~~ event, that I didn't understand, happened yesterday. I was studying History in my bedroom as usual, but my mother entered the room and ~~shouted~~ <A> (urlò) <a> at me. She seemed very angry and impatient only because I had forgotten to put in order my room. I thing

that ~~I m~~ it is my due to do it, but it isn't necessary to be so angry ~~for th~~ if I don't keep <A> in order <a> regolarly ~~m~~ the bedroom.

<T01/20.10>

Everybody has experienced shouting and yelling in his/her lifetime. My mother used to yell at me too and for the same reason. I think that it is important to tidy up and to be tidy but maybe it is not so good to become obsessed with tidiness. Well, now I don't know how messy was your room!!!

<S28/22.11>

One thing I'm happy or sad about <p> ~~I'm very happy~~ Saturday night I came back from Barcelona, it was a wonderful trip because I ~~passed~~ spent a lovely time with seven nice schoolmates. I'm very happy to be so close with them. ~~They~~ We often talked about our problems ~~and~~ and played carts all together in a room of the hotel where we stayed. We also visited a lot of nice places such as the "Sagrada familia" and <A> we often <a> ate a typical Spanish dish the "paella".

<T01/22.11>

I have never been to continental Spain but I spent a week in the Canary Islands with some friends when I was 22. Besides sunbathing and sightseeing around all I did was eat paella and drink papaya juice. I really had a great time! And it's true. When you are in good company it is even more exciting. But remember you don't play carts but cards!!! Unless you invented a new game!

<S28/22.01>

<I> Saturday afternoon I went to visit a lake. It was great. The sun was shining and the lake mirrored huge trees, <A> which stayed <a> around it. I went there with my mother ~~and~~ my sister and my little dog too. <p> <I> We arrived at the lake at 12 after two hours by car ~~an~~, then we had lunch in a nice wooden shelter. After a relaxing walk we decided to come back home. We spent a lovely time <A> all <a> together.

<T01/22.01>

It sounds like you really had a relaxing Saturday afternoon. While I was reading your journal I was just trying to make out what possible lake you went to. I can't think of any at two hours' driving from where you live. I'd like to know where this place is (and perhaps you can tell me next time) because it could be a nice destination for a Sunday trip. I think it is also very nice that the three of you plus the dog went; in fact, you seem to enjoy your sister's company a lot as I very often see you together in the school premises.

<S28/07.02>

Last week I went to the library ~~to study~~ with few school-mates to study. The library was full of persons and there weren't free seats.

As soon as we saw an empty room we entered it, ~~evef~~ even if at the door of this room there was a piece of paper, on which it was written that the place was reserved only for people under 14. My friends and I were desperated; we ~~n~~ absolutely needed a place to study. We sat at a table but suddenlly a man, a very rude library's employee, said we couldn't stay there. I explained that we didn't disturb anybody as the room was empty. But he didn't want to hear any reasons. I was very upset and angry so I decided with my friends to sit on the floor in sign of protest. When the attendant came back and saw us, understanding that the fact could damage the library's image, he found us a place.

<T01/07.02>

Very often it's not enough to be polite or to ask for things politely. You have to force things upon you. Anyway, the librarian was probably trying to have you respect the regulations at first, in the hope that somebody would leave the place. When he saw you were desperate and unnecessarily sitting on the floor as the adjoining room was empty, he made up his mind. I don't mind people informing me that I'm nnot allowed to do something, but I do get angry and offended if someone is not civil. So, your "passive resistance" was a good choice!

<S28/14.03>

Last Saturday I decided to spend a lovely night with my father instead of going out with my friends. We went to dance to a disco, where there is only "liscio". The place was full of people on average over fifty, Therefore, at first I felt a little bit lost. This feeling gave up as soon as ~~the~~ music began to play. I think that my father and me were the worst dancing couple on the dance floor. Just at the end of the first song my feet were sore, I could stay no more. I had to sit at a table near the dance floor and to drink a coke to regain energies. I also had a terrible headache because my father, in the few balls we did, managed to turn like the great dancers but in vain. We lost regularly the balance. People around us laughed at our hampered movements. But it didn't matter, we didn't feel any shame for after all it was a very funny experience, a pretext to pass a Saturday night in a different way together with my father.

<T01/14.03>

You really sound like you had a wonderful time and I bet you did. Your experience reminds me of the one I had last year when my American friends were visiting us for a week. I took them to dance folk music. There were six of us all together including my two friends. Of course we were the worst dancers. The good dancers must have hated us. We zig-zagged across the dancing floor bumping into pople and stepping on each other' s feet. It was so funny! I had the best of times. I think it was very considerate of you to have spent the evening wth you father. I am sure he was proud of being in company with a young attractive girl!

<S29/11.10>

One thing that you have learned today. <p> I've learned a lot of new words about nature. It will be difficult to study all of them, but I'll try to. Maybe some are very unusual, so I won't need to learn them. I will see, if I have time!

<T01/11.10>

Yes, it is true some of the words we have encountered today are not used in every-day conversation but if you have time try to learn as much as you can because you never know in life. You might need them one day!

<S29/18.10>

One thing I have learned today. <p> Today's lesson dealt with Medieval Drama. I don't think it ~~has been~~ was boring, but I saw all my friends yawning and chattering (see, I've learned two of the words of the past lesson!). I guess it's because today is Monday and we haven't recovered <A> completely <a> from our Saturday night in disco yet. It would be surely better if the timetable were different. I fear about the classworks made on Mondays! Theorically we should go to bed earlier on Saturdays but... ~~it doesn't~~ I can't even think about it. I need Saturday night! It's the only way I Have to relax from the week. Next time I'll drink a coffee!

<T01/18.10>

I have to admit that Medieval Drama can be boring. I like it because I try to understand the social <A> and historical <a> implications of it. I am pretty confident that everybody will enjoy literature in the next few week when we deal with "Doctor Faustus" (at least I hope!). I wish we didn't have classes, our English classes on Monday, too because I don't want to have people sleepy and tired ~~of~~ all year long. But you seem to have the right solution: coffee. If you like spending your Saturday nights at the disco, why not? Just try to get home with reliable drivers bacause of accidents!

<S29/20.10>

One thing I'm still wondering ~~now~~ about. <p> There's a thing I've missed today. I've heard about Humanism during or after the War of the Roses or something like that. I've tried to check what I wrote with what Giulia wrote, but I'm still confused. I guess there wasn't any Humanism durign the War, so the only chance is that it came after it. Can Humanism be considered the same as Renaissance?

<T01/23.10>

Humanism or New Learning was a sort of movement or philosophy that emphasized secular concerns as a result of the study of classical art and civilization. The Renaissance is the historical period during which Humanism is spread and the new philosophy theorized. It is during the Renaissance that a new vision of life arises and the Medieval thought is rejected. I'd explain Humanism as being the theoretical foundation of the Renaissance: understand the "time" when the doctrine flourishes and thrives. In a sense the Renaissance is the direct consequence of the humanist doctrine and a sort of expansion.

<S29/22.11>

One thing I'm happy or sad about <p> I'm rather happy in this period, about all. I'm very relaxed because we've been at school only a few days recently so I've been able to <A> do <a> homework for the future and next day I'll have nothing to do. Then I'm happy because my parents allow me to go out every Saturday night and I enjoy very much dancing and chatting with people, etc. On Tuesday my dear friend Emanuela will give a party for her 18th birthday and I think we'll have a lot of fun. My boyfriend will come, too, and hopefully we'll spend some time together.

<T01/22.11>

Well, I'm glad everything is going very well in your life. I also understand that you have reached an agreement with your parents: you are now given permission to go out on Saturday nights. I personally agree with your parents because I think they can trust you. After all you have demonstrated to be a very reliable and mature person at least as far as the things you are required to do are concerned. You are very successful at school and what more could your parents ask for? On the other hand, try not to let your family down but I'll stop here because I don't want to sound like a preacher! I didn't know you were such a good friend of Emanuela. I knew you lived in the same town though. If you can try to help her in English a bit because she has to warm up!!!

<S29/19.01>

Help! <p> I'm shocked. I have no words. I can't understand people any more. Boys, for example. I'm beginning to hate them. They think they have the right to treat us however they want. They treat us however they want. They are the most selfish people I know. The only way to protect us and to avenge would be to do with them what they do with us (by "us" I mean "girls"), but I don't really feel to be able to behave in such a way. They hurt people without caring and, more, without a reason. Gosh, I can't stand this! I'm desperate. Did you live this situation when you were my age? Can you find an answer to this behaviour? I need advice!

<T01/19.01>

Well, Consuelo, I think I could write a book on the subject! Of course I had to cope with the same situation, of course I agree with you. You know, it's hard, but you've got to realize that a man is a man and a woman is a woman. It sounds like a joke but it's not. We are just different! And the difference is not just physical, but one which involves culture and mentality. What gives a man the right, for example, to expect everything from a woman? Men are spoiled by their families, they are not brought up to become independent entities but rather "prepared" to be taken care of by a "lovely" and "sweet" wife!!! I can't stand this mentality, I hate it, too! On the other hand, though, I believe we are by far more accomplished individuals, we are superior because at least we know how to face the world, we are endowed (thanks to our experiences) with a higher sensibility and we can change the world by educating our children differently. Naturally, it is not fair to generalize. I know a lot of boys who are far from being like our stereotype, many friends of mine's husbands share feelings and opinions with their wives. But they are still rare. In this respect, I personally think that Italy is a Third World Country, women have to struggle hard to assert themselves in the family and in society, to have people respect them and acknoledge their new role, which is so much different from the traditional submissive and passive one of the past. My husband keeps telling me that I am a feminist, but I'm not. I just believe it's high time the attitude towards women changed, I just think (and wish for them) that men must become more mature and responsible, and I don't think there should be second-hand citizens on account of their different sex. My friend in New York says: "Men, can't live with them, can't live without 'em". Maybe, after all, she's right you have to come to terms with them if you want to live with them but remember: never let them "step over" your feelings and rights! This is what my parents told me when I was a teen-ager and I never forget that when I'm struggling for my little place in the world.

<S29/07.02>

Well, thank you for the sympathy. My friends agree with me by saying that boys are too often insensible beings, but it's difficult to speak of such things with grown-up. They think these are not concrete problems but for us they are. I mean, I know there are people with much bigger problems but, since we have none, these can become "existential difficulties". There's a sentence you wrote I will always remember. Don't let them step over your feelings and your rights". I completely agree with it. I've come to the conclusion that <U> I <u> am the most important person. I don't mean to be selfish; I just want to say that if someone doesn't respect me, he doesn't deserve me. And I really think it. It's not worth to suffer for somebody who doesn't care, is it? Now I would know what to write in a paragraph about the differences between a woman and a man!

<T01/07.02>

I'd like to tell you a little story about a girl, one or two years younger than you, whom I used to tutor in the afternoon. Her

English was really bad and I had a hard time with her. Eventually she got her "six" but during that year her grades would vary from four to five, at least in the beginning. OK. One day, it was the day before a grammar test, she came and was very depressed, she was terrified she was going to fail. To cheer her up I said: "Come on, Rita! And even if you fail tomorrow, there are so many REALLY important problems. Who cares about a four or five?". And she replied: "I know, but you see, right now and FOR ME, it is important to do well on the test". I realized she was right! There are always more important issues to discuss or worry about. But I have come to understand that each person, each moment, each age, each situation becomes extremely significant for "the person" in question. That's why I don't consider your discussions about men being insensitive as petty or unimportant. Of course, you have to choose the right time to start a discussion with your mom or dad. Probably, after a hard and long day, your mom will turn you down especially if she still has to clean up and iron! I am flattered to know that you have adopted my philosophy but I want to add a little warning. Don't be too hard, there are situations, and you just have to know when, which require a bit of softness. But just sometimes!

<S29/14.03>

Organizing a party <p> This is a very busy week for me. Next Sunday, on the 20th of March, I'll be eighteen and so I'm organizing a party for Saturday night. I'm having a lot of fun inviting people and thinking how to move all the furniture to make more place. As far as this is concerned, my father is desperate. When I asked him for permission he agreed willingly; now he's realizing that he's going to have thirty people in his sitting-room. Actually I'll have some problems, because the room is not very big but anyway if there aren't enough chairs the guests will stand, won't they? I'm not sure if the party will be nice or not, of course I hope it will. Private parties are often boring, but since the people I invited are rather <ITQ> active <itq>, probably they will create a funny atmosphere. Next time I'll tell you how it worked, OK?

<T01/14.03>

Well, first of all "Happy Birthday". I know it is exciting to turn 18. I hope that your party was successful and that everybody had a wonderful time including your father's sitting-room! Probably, your dad felt miserable when the "hordes of friends" started to invade his natural habitat and tread all over the place, but people only turn 18 once... I imagine the mess was beyond description. That's parents' life! I'd like to know about your party whether it worked out OK or not. I don't think private parties are boring; it just depends on the participants. Don't you think?

<S30/11.10>

Write down one thing that you have ~~heard~~ <A> larned <a> today.<p> Today I have learned new English <A> interesting <a> words that I have never heard before now. <p> These words are: chattering, perishing.

<T01/11.10>

It will sure be an interesting exercice which will enable you not only to learn new vocabulary but also new structures.

<S30/18.10>

Today I have learned a lot of things about Medieval Drama. I think it's very interesting, because I have learned things that I didn't know about the life of English people at that time. So I've understood that there is a big difference between the life ~~of people~~ during the 12th century and our life ~~in~~ <A> in <a> the 20th century.

<T01/18.10>

You are totally right! <p> the conditions in which people were forced to live during the Middle Ages were appaling! I'm glad I was born in the 20th century. Probably future generations will think that our standard of living is poor compared to theirs. But who can predict the future? I know that this period is not extremely exciting for you students but if you can appreciate the opportunity you are given to learn new things, I think it most valuable.

<S30/20.10>

One thing I'm still wondering about, because it is not clear in my mind. <p> Today I've understood all the things I've learned. But ~~one thing~~ <A> a subject <a> that it is not clear in my mind is Mathematic. Since <A> my <a> Birth until now I've never loved it. I can't understand it and I don't know why. ~~Perhaps I'm not a very intelligen~~ I hate Mathematic, but I'd like to understand it.

<T01/20.10>

Not everybody was born with an attitude or disposition toward Mathematics, so you don't have to feel so frustrated. <p> If you could make an effort to understand it, it would be great, because mathematics helps you to develop logic.

<S30/22.11>

One thing I'm happy or ~~said~~ sad about. <p> Today is the 22nd November, and I'm ~~said~~ sad because more than 20 years later, on 22nd November, the ~~p~~ President of the United Stated, J. Kennedy was killed. <p> I think that people haven't the right to kill ~~an~~ other people. ~~And~~ I think that I wouldn't like to be a president or an important person, because I will be always scared of being killed by someone.

<T01/22.11>

Well, fortunately not all famous people are killed or their lives and security threatened. But of course being a V.I.P. implies taking more risks. I wouldn't like to be too important either. I would not accept the idea of giving up my privacy. As to JFK, although 20 years have gone by, the recollection of what happened almost a quarter of a century ago is still very vivid in people's mind and the feelings connected with that event still strong and intense. What is surprising, in my opinion, is that people, I mean, young people, who do not have a direct knowledge of this assassination feel so involved in it!

<S30/24.01>

<i> Today is a beautiful day, sunny and not very cold, but I'm ~~thinking~~ a little nostalgic because I'm thinking about my last summer holidays, how much fun I had and how quickly they passed. <p> <i> I hope that the next summer holidays arrive soon and that they pass not so quickly like the last ones.

<T01/24.01>

<i> Happy moments go by quickly because they keep us busy both physically and mentally. Last summer I had wonderful holidays too, so wonderful that I sometimes think I never visited those islands! I do hope that you will enjoy your holidays this coming up summer as well. But I warn you: next summer will go by as quickly as the one which just passed.

<S30/07.02>

I also think that the next summer holidays will pass as quickly as the last one, even if I hope that they go by more slowly. But it's impossible because boring, ~~and~~ sad moments nevesr pass and are too long, instead happy moments are to short. <p> Unfortunately also life goes by too quickly and we become older and older. When I was a child the days never passed and I wanted to grow, to be 18 years old, but now I'm 17 years old and I'd like to become younger than I am, to be still a child.

<T01/07.02>

The truth is, Lorena, that we are seldom happy with what we have. Of course I mean man in general. When you are little you want to grow fast, when your are an adult you wish you could go back, unwind the clock. Happy moments go by quickly, when you are bored you get more bored. Well, I guess, it's life. The sooner you accept the situation the better you'll feel in the future. What I decided to do is to profit from every situation I might find myself coping with. So at least I won't lose any time. <p> By the way, how are you going to spend your summer holidays this year? Are you planning to go abroad? I really think your English has improved. Unlike a lot of people who are complaining about how little they learnt last summer I think you did really great.

<S31/11.10>

Write down one thing that you've learned today. <p> Today, during the english lesson I've learned the significance of a lot of words. I've discovered one thing that I didn't know, I mean that crimson. is a colour. <A> I've discovered <a> this thanks to my friend Consuelo.

<T01/11.10>

You know, English lessons can be of help in learning a lot of new words in Italian, too. I very often learn the meaning of Italian words through English. After all, the most important thing is to learn!

<S31/18.10>

One thing that you've learned today. <p> Today I've learned a lot about medieval drama during the english lesson. I didn't know the existence of mistery and miracle plays and interludes before but I was a bit tired and so I didn't find the lesson very interesting. May be this is <A> also <a> because I don't like the history of literature, and I prefer to study the authors and read their works.

<T01/18.10>

Well, I hope we will soon start to read the authors' texts but you see, it is nonetheless interesting to know the historical background in which literary events took place or developed. I like the history of English Literature, I think it's fascinating because it helps you understand a lot of things about Anglo-Saxon culture and way of life. So, just wait and see <U> if <u> it gets better.

<S31/20.10>

One thing I'm still wondering about. <p> I'm still wondering about the title of the essay I have to do in German. In fact I think it is very difficult to understand and I've no idea of what to write in the essay. I hope <A> to understand the title <a> as soon as possible and to know what to write.

<T01/20.10>

I'm sorry I can't be of help as I don't know the title of your essay. From what I understand I'm pretty sure that the essay is an assignment the teacher gave you for homework. At home, you'll probably have a lot of time to think about it and to write down <A> a good many <a> ideas. The problem will be organizing the ideas in a coherent whole.

<S31/22.11>

<U> One thing I'm happy about <u>. <p> Next Saturday evening I'll go out with ~~my~~ my the schoolmates of the elementary school. I'm happy about it because I haven't met them since a long time so it will be a pleasure to meet them again after many years. Surely we'll find ourselves completely changed and we'll have a lot of things to tell. It will be a nice evening, I'm sure.

<T01/22.11>

God! If I think about elementary school I don't even remember the faces of my school-friends. Well, maybe I am exaggerating. I do meet some of them from time to time but we haven't really kept in touch. So, it's good you are still organizing meetings and things together. If you haven't seen them for a long time, you'll probably find your friends totally different, maybe better, maybe worse. Last week I met a friend from highschool I had not seen since we graduated more than 10 years ago. Well he has gotten fatter but he is basically the same. Well, his way of talking and behaving are exactly the same. I wish he had changed though!

<S31/19.01>

<U> One thing that made me laugh <u> Well, I don't really know what to write. Now I'm happy even if I don't know why, so I'd like to tell you something funny that happened to me last Sunday <A> and that maybe will make you laugh too <a>. I had broken my ~~finger~~ toe so I went to the hospital. While I was waiting for the doctor with my mother a woman came to us and said Hallo to my mother. She began to talk to her as she knew ~~my mother~~ her very well, but I had already understood that my mother didn't know her and <A> so <a> I began to laugh. In fact when she went away my mother was laughing too. She asked me if I knew that woman because she couldn't remember who she was or where she had met her. The doctor certainly thought I was crazy because when he visited me I was laughing a lot even if my toe hurt ~~me~~ very much.

<T01/19.01>

It very often happens to me that I meet people I know I've met somewhere but I just can't figure out who they are. Even worse, sometimes I greet people because I think I know them but I don't! So, I understand very well why you couldn't stop laughing. I guess your mom felt kind of embarassed having to reply to the lady accordingly. Anyway, I do think that these funny episodes, though insignificant and petty reflect the need we have to communicate with others, to feel we are somehow involved in other people's lives. I like to interact with people and when I am downtown shopping I stop and chat with everybody. So, maybe this is what the lady wanted to do. Too bad your mom couldn't help her much. But how did you break your toe, it must be so painful to break a bone of the body. I have never experienced fractures in my life.

<S31/07.02>

Yes, you're right, it was painful for me when I broke my toe; I broke it at school, while I was playing football but now I'm quite well, I can walk well but I can't gym or dance even if I'd like to. I know I can't dance now but last night I was in a disco and I couldn't resist the temptation to dance. On the other hand, how can you go to the disco and don't dance? I love dancing, not only disco-music but also latin-dance and I found it really funny; ~~it's a pity~~ <A> unfortunately <a> now I've no occasion to dance <A> Merengue <a> with <A> my <a> friends, because they don't like this sort of music and they can't dance it.

<T01/07.02>

You know, it is always like that: when you can't do something or when you are not allowed to do things, you feel an irresistible and compelling attraction. It must be some psychological mechanism. What is prohibited by law and authority in general appears more desirable and attractive. But let's not get into the pathological. <p> Dancing, singing and music are all marvellous activities. But besides listening to music I don't do much else. I am lazy and shy. In fact, I have very rarely danced in my life for fear people should think I am ridiculous. To tell you the truth, I am not very good at dancing; I am a failure because I am shy. But I can survive without dancing so I gave up! <p> Latin-American music is very nice. I love the stirring and lively tunes typical of those countries. To know more about the culture of Latin-Americans, I hosted a Mexican girl for one year a long time ago. It was a most interesting experience, we are still in touch and very good friends. I remember her listening to "her" music quite often when she lived with us. Maybe she was feeling homesick...

<S31/13.03>

I've just read the article about alcoholism you gave us last week and it really struck me. I don't know any alcoholics personally but I know some teenagers who drink a lot especially on weekends, when they go to parties or to the disco. They're far away to be alcoholics but I can't understand their behaviour anyway. Some of them say they get drunk only to have more fun. Well, I really can't understand this: What do they mean for "more fun"? I can have ~~more~~ fun also without drinking! <p> Unfortunately, I'm realizing that there are also many young people who smoke cigarettes that are very hard and have more or less the same effect as alcohol. There are much more people that smoke this kind of cigarettes than I thought and this fact disappointed me. What are these teenagers looking for? Or what do they want to show?

<T01/13.03>

It is scientifically proved that alcohol and nicotin have harmful effects on our health. Nevertheless, so many people are addicted, and not only addicted, but they can't even be a bad example for those who have not yet been caught in the trap! There must be a mysterious reason beyond all these people seeking consolation or hoping to get rid of some stress. And what about those who drink just to have more fun? <p> I feel exactly as you feel: disarmed, disappointed and frightened. I am very happy to hear that you disagree with these attitudes and many more share your point of view. However, I can't forget all the teenagers who got killed because they were drunk. It is really a pity to lose one's life because of such a stupid habit! And I can't believe that, as our article says, there are people who need to be on the booze to forget an affair! Don't they have some nerve in life? Of course, it must be more complicated than that; I am not a psychologist, I just don't know. My only aim was to draw my students' attention to this growing social issue so that you can take your time to think about the consequences of alcohol. I wish all the best for all of you and therefore want to make a little contribution to see you happy.

<S32/22.11>

One thing I'm happy or sad about. <p> This period is very happy for me because the relation with my parents is getting better and better, so I can speak with my mother about things that <PE> worry <pe> me. It's still a bit difficult because untill a week ago we didn't meet often and between us there was like a wall of <PE> incomprensione <pe>. I hope that this situation will remain the same for long time.

<T01/22.11>

I'm happy you are finding a way out of your depression. It's important to be able to cope with life and to try to get along with people even if you may not like them. Also remember, it isn't easy to overcome incomprehension but each one of us has his/her own ideas and we have to respect them more than reject them. Anyway, I'm glad this new state of affairs has developed and that you have all reached a new equilibrium in the family. <p> Now, Chiara, you have to try to feel more serene and recover from the unhappy moments of the past. Also in school try to catch up and force yourself to find or at least to see a goal at the end of it.

<S32/07.02>

I trust very much in friendship, so I need a real friend, to speak to, to tell all my experiences and so on; but it is very difficult to find. I had, or I though to have, a real friend for seven <A> long <a> years until the last September, when she found a boyfriend. We were good friend, wherever I went she was with me and vice versa. She was very important in my life because she knew me better than anyone else. When she found that boyfriend things changed, our friendship was getting from bad to worse and now everything is over. After this experience I didn't believe so much friends but recently I began to frequent a girl of my class, which is very nice and I like (very much) a lot. It's understandable that I can't trust her at once but I think also that if my other friend treated me in that way after seven years, so this one could do the same. I want to try another time and I hope now things will be better.

<T01/07.02>

Friendship is an essential component of our everyday life, and therefore, it can be very painful when a friend lets us down or when we think we are surrounded by good friends and then these friends frustrate our expectations. <p> Of course you have to continue to trust people and to make friends. We need friends to support and to be supported, otherwise, what is life all about? If you like this classmate a lot, I don't see why you shouldn't give her a chance! She might turn out not to be the right friend for you, but you won't know this unless you try. And in case of failure, you'll be offered so many other opportunities... Fortunately or unfortunately nothing and nobody lasts forever!

<S32/16.03>

There are two weeks that I'm sad but I don't know why. I feel alone and nobody worries about that. I think it's terrible to have nobody to speak sincerally with when someone needs to. Well, now there's noone next to me, I have to hide my feelings also if I would like to have a friend to whom I could talk everythink. May be it's only a transient period but now it's very difficult to be happy and to hide all, I hope it will pass off soon.

<T01/16.03>

You will realize in life that nobody can solve your problems and therefore, though it is nice to have a friend to rely on, you cannot count on people 100%. If you don't have friends, ask yourself why. Maybe you just don't trust people enough to open up with them. <p> Very often we foster our own little obsessions and it sounds like this is one. You don't think you can make friends possibly because you feel (unconsciously) you don't deserve any. Fight it back and trust people a little more.

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